

MX-5, MIATA, EUNOS – THREE NAMES, ONE BRILLIANT CAR

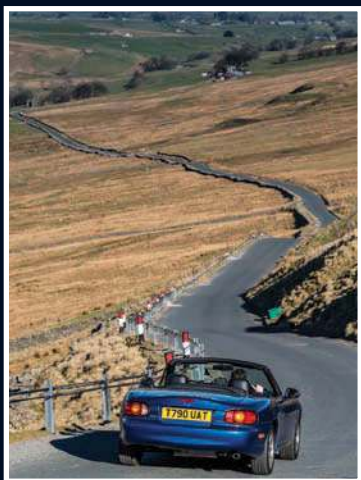
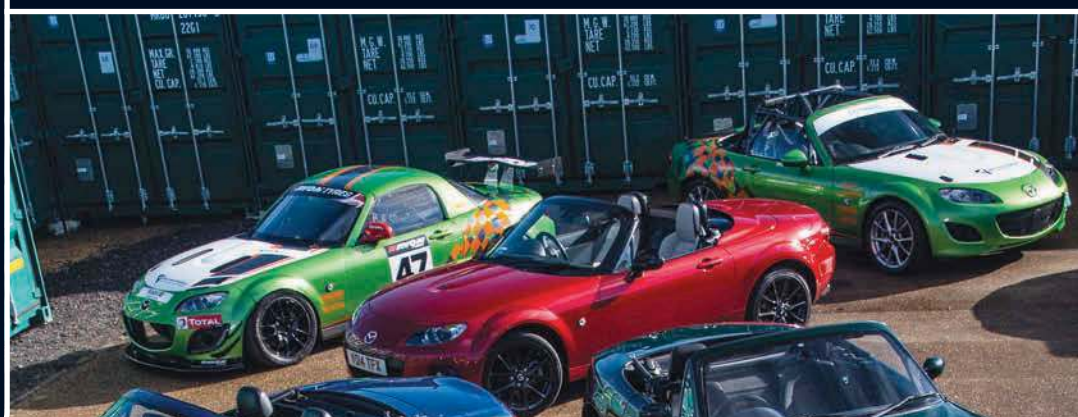
TOTAL MX-5

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MK3 SAMCO SPORT HIGH
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MX-5 at 30



ROAD TRIP

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in the Yorkshire Dales



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Supercharger or turbo?
Two mates give answers



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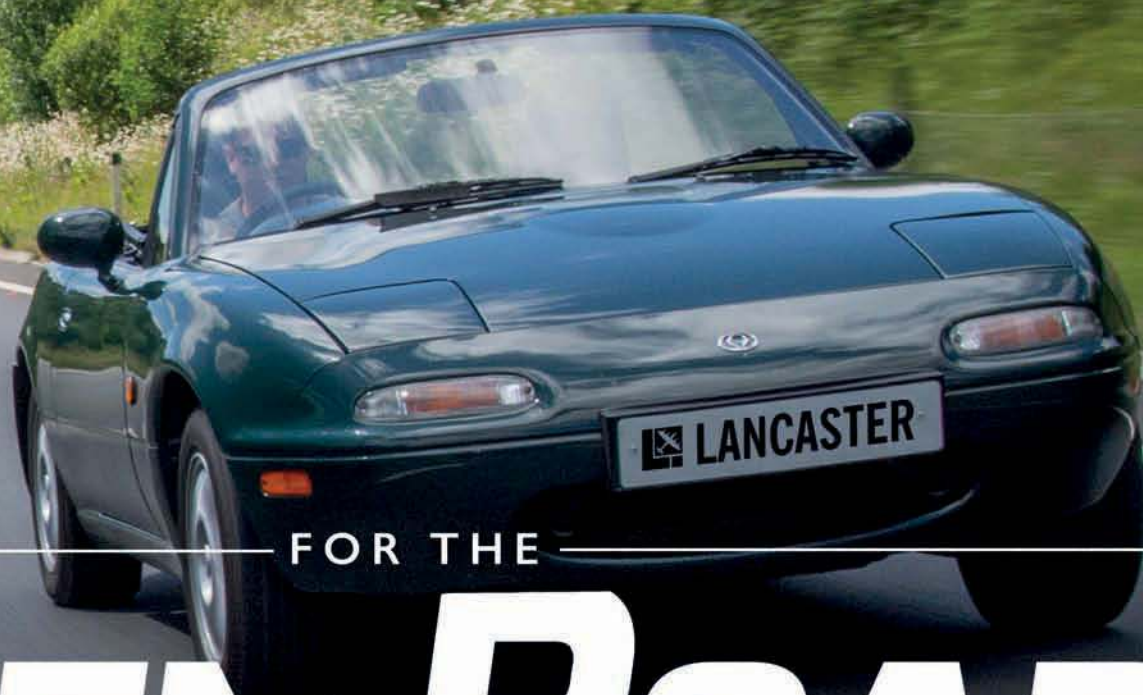
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FIRST WORDS



Other sports cars, such as the Porsche 911, may have enjoyed longer production runs, but I reckon 30 years for a relatively mass produced affordable roadster is pretty good going. Normally a mainstream car manufacturer gets bored of its niche model after a few years – or the market does – or reinvents it in another format, forgetting what made the car such a hit in the first place.

Not Mazda. Not with the MX-5. Over the course of three decades and across four generations, the MX-5 has evolved but kept at its core the original's attributes of an entertaining rear-wheel drive driving experience, good looks, compact size, mechanical reliability, and keen pricing. It's a formula that was instantly and hugely successful when Mazda launched the MX-5 in Chicago 30 years ago, and it remains just as appealing today. Mazda should be applauded for not meddling too much: even the oft-maligned mk3 is these days being reassessed by many as a worthy MX-5 after all.

Given that it is the MX-5's 30th anniversary, we mulled going back over old ground. But we figured that as MX-5 enthusiasts already, our

readers probably know most of the background to the car anyway. Besides, we covered the car's creation in some depth in the first couple of issues of *Total MX-5*, so rather than repeat ourselves we went on the hunt for stories you may not have heard before, but which are relevant to the 30th anniversary celebrations.

Mazda UK's Heritage Fleet, for example, that you can read about on page 34. Within that fleet are nine MX-5s of all four generations, and we were lucky enough to drive four of them, including an exceptionally low mileage Le Mans. I'd also urge you to check out this issue's Insight feature, on page 20. We've interviewed Tim Watson, Mazda UK's PR manager at the time of the MX-5's British launch, and he has some fantastic tales to tell. I knew Tim back then and he was too professional to divulge anything but the corporate line. He's out of the

game now – growing grapes in California – and was more than happy to remove the PR filter: it's a great read.

Finally, supercharger or turbo? On page 40 a couple of good mates, Oli and Rob, have differing opinions but a shared passion for the MX-5.



Brett Fraser, editor
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What's been happening out there in the big, wide, diverse world of the MX-5

THE PERFECT BIRTHDAY PRESENT

Mazda launched the original MX-5 three decades ago and to celebrate the occasion has created the 30th Anniversary Edition

TIME ZOOM-ZOOMS BY, it would seem, because 30 years have passed since Mazda launched the original Miata MX-5 to a wildly enthusiastic world at the 1989 Chicago Auto Show. Three decades on, Mazda was back in Chicago to announce the 30th Anniversary Edition MX-5, of which 3000 are to be produced – as both roadsters and RFs – and shared amongst all of the company's global markets. Mazda UK has managed to secure 600 examples (400 roadsters at £28,095 a pop, and 200 RFs for £29,895 apiece) and the order books are already open, with first deliveries due in the summer. All cars feature the 181bhp 2.0-litre Skyactiv-G engine coupled to the six-speed manual gearbox.

As you can see from the pictures, the 30th Anniversary is very orange: Racing Orange, in fact, a colour developed specially for the car and which is the only hue in which it is available. Splashes of orange spill over into the cabin, most noticeably along the top of the door cards, but also on the air vent surrounds, the piping on the standard-fit Recaros, and in the stitching on those seats and across the fascia. The colour crops up on the brake calipers, too, which at the front are now Brembo items (Nissin supplies the rears), that haven't before been used on UK mk4s.

Those brightly-coloured calipers poke out from behind specially commissioned Rays Co Ltd forged aluminium alloys: they're similar in style to the ZE40 Rays wheels used for the Global MX-5 Cup race cars but have a different spoke design

and come in a dark gunmetal finish. And continuing that track-inspired theme, the 30th Anniversary is fitted with Bilstein dampers, a strut-brace and a limited-slip differential. Less racy but nevertheless very welcome, the car's also supplied with a nine-speaker (including a pair in each headrest) Bose sound system which is compatible with Apple Carplay and Android Auto.

That paint...

Sometimes it's the simple things that turn out complicated. Orange paint, for example. You might imagine that, rather like visiting the Dulux counter at your local DIY superstore, you would pick it out from a colour chart, press a few buttons on a big mixing machine, and then a vivid shade of orange would shoot out from the end of the spray gun... But it wasn't so easy, confesses Keiichi Okamoto, colour designer on the 30th Anniversary project.

Okamoto's brief from Masashi Nakayama, the MX-5 programme manager and chief designer, was to create a special colour: 'Maybe something like an orange from the morning sunrise, a colour that reminds you of a new day beginning.' How hard could that be?

Depends on whether you talk to an expert on paint and colour. 'Orange is made of yellow and red, which are the most transparent body colours,' explains Okamoto. 'Orange does not conceal well, you need to add layers of paintwork to get a beautiful finish. And orange requires a specific process: a completely new method of paintwork from



Top: 30 years ago, red, white and blue ruled. Above: today, it's orange

other Mazda colours.

'With transparent colours, we usually add black or white pigment to control the transparency of the paintwork. However, adding too much white will blur the colour, and adding too much black makes it cloudy. And Nakayama wanted a vivid orange with high transparency. An experienced designer knows how difficult this is. But I still wanted it to happen for a model as special as the 30th Anniversary MX-5.'

Wanting it to happen and actually making it happen took Okamoto on a 'perplexing journey' and at one stage he

even warned his boss to be prepared for a 'worst case scenario'. But after much experimentation, a joint effort between the designers, paint suppliers and Mazda's paint production line achieved the desired result. How? That's not something Okamoto is prepared to divulge.

...and those wheels

Rays Co Ltd has been making aftermarket wheels for the MX-5 for decades and also collaborated with Mazda on the racing rims for the Global MX-5 Cup cars. And it's from those competition items that the



30th Anniversary's lightweight forged aluminium alloys take their inspiration.

The ZE40 RS30 wheels were co-developed by Rays and Mazda: supplying vital input from the Mazda side of things was Miko Ando, who is described as a 'master engineer in vehicle dynamics and herself an RX-7 driver.'

Ando explains that while you can see a family resemblance between the race wheel and

that of the 30th Anniversary, the design of the spokes sets them apart. On the competition wheel the spokes form a pronounced arch as they travel between the hub and the rim – the spokes of the road wheel are flatter and straighter and have a more robust appearance. They also have a much tighter clearance with the Brembo calipers on the front, which according to Ando 'imparts a sophisticated and

thus special feel.'

Although Mazda is being coy about how much the lightweight wheels weigh, Ando reports that they really make a difference to the handling of a car that is already as light as the mk4 MX-5.

And a final point of interest – while the ZE40 RS30 is mostly supplied as a 17in diameter fitment, on the Japanese domestic market the 30th Anniversary roadsters roll on 16in versions of the wheel.

It's been emotional

Anyone from Mazda who works on the MX-5 reckons it's different from most other cars, and that can include the special editions. Munenori Yamaguchi

from the product department, who also had a hand in the 10th and 20th Anniversary editions, certainly thinks so.

'Working on the MX-5 is a blessing,' professes Yamaguchi. 'This special edition celebrates the model's third decade, which absolutely compelled me. Throughout the process I again experienced the passion and desire that so many people put into the MX-5. And it's not just colleagues at Mazda, but also from many other manufacturers like Recaro, Bose, Bilstein, Brembo and Nissin.'

'There are no easy paths with the MX-5. New obstacles constantly await. But we overcame these with love and for this car.'

MX-5 minters make mega money

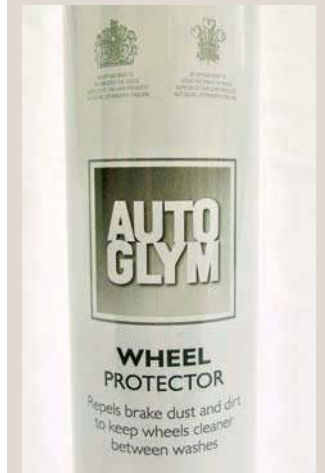
A pair of super-low mileage MX-5s brought strong money at the Scottish-based Morris Leslie classic car auction at the end of February. Under the hammer were a 1998 mk1 Berkeley with just 1898 miles on the clock, and a 2004 mk2 Euphonic that had covered a barely believable 839 miles.

Both cars had been driven for a couple of years after purchase and then put into long-term storage.

The Berkeley cost its new owner £15,582 after all fees were paid, while the Euphonic was sold after the auction for £8480. Both cars were previously owned by Alan

Gorst who bought them because, 'it was a no-brainer'. Gorst entered them in the Morris Leslie auction to help fund the restoration of another MX-5.

The sale also saw an unrelated 1994 mk1 Eunox with 133,000 miles on the odometer bring £2862.



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Socks appeal

Now here's a skill – taking inspiration from automotive and motorsport colours and patterns and turning them into stylish socks. Designed and produced by a Portuguese company called Heel Tread, these particular socks are based on the livery of the Le Mans-winning Mazda 787B race car which also, of course, spawned the mk1 Le Mans limited edition.

Heel Tread's socks contain 80% combed cotton and cost £9.00 a pair, plus postage. Check out heeltread.com and browse the company's other designs: we're sure you'll feel tempted...



• 787B •

Factory remakes more parts for mk1

Our friends at Miataland have alerted us to the fact that the Mazda factory in Hiroshima appears to be offering an extensive catalogue of new components for the mk1 MX-5.

As part of the Roadster Restoration programme (see *Total MX-5* issue 10) we knew that hoods, Bridgestone tyres, 'daisy' alloy wheels, and Nardi steering wheels and gearknobs were being remanufactured, but the PDFs we've seen on the internet – a couple of pages of which we've reproduced here – indicate that a vast number of other components have also been recommissioned.

As well as the sexy stuff already mentioned, the list

includes screws, bolts and washers, grommets, brake caliper pistons and window parts, underbody splashguards, seatbelts, floor mats and even replacement sticker labels.

Shamefully none of us studied Japanese at school so we can't decipher everything we've seen, but the catalogue pages do include prices in Japanese yen, and general descriptions in English.

We know that Mazda in Japan doesn't always keep its colleagues around the world fully apprised of everything that it's up to, so when we find out more we'll be sure to let you know.

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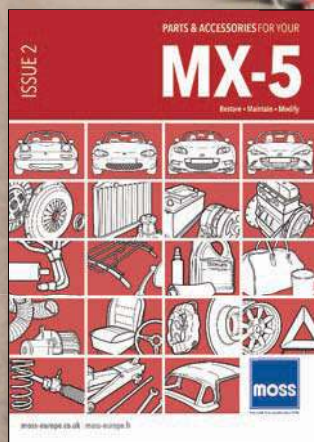
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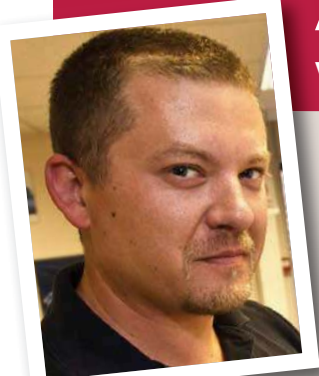
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POLYBUSH BUMP STOPS, MK3/3.5/3.75

Mk3s have a reputation for premature bump stop wear but these replacements will bring your suspension back to rude health. Sold as pairs for front and rear.



LED LIGHTS FOR REAR NUMBERPLATE, MK2/2.5

LED lights for your rear numberplate are becoming a very popular upgrade, so IL Motorsport has produced these bright sparks for the mk2/2.5. Sold as a pair.



SILICONE AIR INTAKE HOSE, MK4/RF 1.5-LITRE

Replacing the standard hose between the airbox and intake, the smoother innards of this IL Motorsport item promote better airflow and throttle response.



ADJUSTABLE FRONT ANTI-ROLL BAR DROP LINK, MK4

Compatible with standard and aftermarket front anti-roll bars, these superior quality adjustable drop links help dial out body roll for track and fast road use.

YOUR CARS

As massive MX-5 fans we always welcome seeing what you're running around in, whether it's on the road, track or simply in the sunshine

If you'd like your car featured on our Your Cars pages, then drop a line to brett@brettfraser.co.uk with a couple of high-resolution photographs of your MX-5, and a few brief details – model, year, mileage, mods, and what you use it for. We look forward to hearing from you.



JOHN BUCKLEY, ALASKA. 2001 MK2 SE AUTOCROSS
Acquired from his father-in-law in 2014, a year later John decided to take his mk2 autocross racing and is now hooked. The car is fully prepped to compete.



GRAHAM SHIMMONS, NORTHERN IRELAND. MK1 1.6
This is Graham's third MX-5 and for obvious reasons it's nicknamed Strikey. A 1.6, it has a Jackson Racing cold air intake kit, BBS alloys, a rear spoiler and twin headlights.



GED CLOUGH, UK. 1989 MK1
To the delight of his girlfriend and neighbours, Ged's about to get rid of his 'ridiculously loud exhaust'. His orange mk1 also boasts a set of MeisterRs.



STEPHEN LADEJI, UK. MK1 1.8
When Stephen got in touch he was about to tidy up his mk1 for the summer, so it might look different now. It's his second MX-5 and his daughter loves it.



JO ELIZABETH CHARMAN-BENNETT, UK. MK3 2.0 SPORT
Apparently 'a lover of all things shiny', Jo's mk3 is reported to be 'blinged up to the max, with chrome trim everywhere', including a substantial boot rack used for continental adventures.



MARTIN THORPE, UK. 1997 EUNOS 1.8 SPECIAL PACKAGE
Martin bought the mk1 to replace a motorcycle and has subjected it to a rolling restoration programme, including a full respray. He also used it as his wedding car.



STEVE SWEENEY, UK. 2010 MK3, BBR 200
A track fan, Steve's mk3 has been treated to a BBR 200 kit giving 208bhp, Ohlins suspension, Brembo discs, and 17in Team Dynamic wheels.



DAVE WATSON, UK. MK3 MIYAKO, BBR SUPER 200
A weekend toy that Dave bought new to replace a Caterham 7, it features a BBR Super 200 engine upgrade and a 30mm ride height drop on Eibach springs.



MIKE FELLOWS, UK. 1994 MK1 CALIFORNIA
Mike's California is number 23 out of 300 and despite its age still has only 68,000 miles on the clock. But Mike has taken it for a trip around the North Coast 500 route.



JEFF GRAHAM, AUSTRALIA. 1999 MK2 1.8
Brisbane-based Jeff, with the help of his brother, built this motorsport special to do hillclimbs and trackday sprints. It uses a Jackson Racing supercharger and has 220bhp at the wheels.

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WIN!

A set of SamcoSport High Performance Silicone Hoses for your mk3



IN AN IDEAL WORLD every mk3 MX-5 would have emerged from the factory equipped with silicone hoses of the same high quality as those produced by British expert SamcoSport. But in big car factories accountants dictate the spec and so rubber hoses it was.

The trouble with rubber is that it hardens and cracks over time. It also can cope only with a comparatively narrow temperature range, and it's not a fan of high pressure. And when you increase the power and torque of your engine via a management upgrade or supercharging or turbocharging, heat and pressure come along for the ride.

SamcoSport's silicone hoses are manufactured using the highest quality European automotive silicones and fabrics, to create a tough, flexible and durable hose. The wall thickness of the multi-layer hose varies depending on the overall diameter of the hose and

what it's being used for. The result of all this is a silicone hose that can withstand temperatures of up to 250°C and handle pressures far in excess of even the best rubber alternatives, making them ideal for modified engines and standard motors alike.

A bonus for those who like their performance enhancements to also have a little aesthetic flair, is that the SamcoSport hoses are available in a variety of different colours.

SamcoSport has generously offered a full set of its top-notch silicone hoses for the mk3 MX-5 as a competition prize in this issue. Entry is simple: merely supply us with the details requested on the form here, and answer the not-too-taxing question. Good luck.

To enter

A quick look at the company's website at samcosport.com should help you answer the following question:

In what country are all SamcoSport hoses manufactured?

Please supply the following:

Your name
Email address
Mobile number

With the subject line of:
'Spring 2019 Competition'
please email your answer and details to:
totalmx-5@chpltd.com
Closing date for entries is Friday 3 May.
A winner will be picked at random.



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CLUB NEWS

Every issue *Total MX-5* brings you updates from the MX-5 Owners Club



PHOTO: ANDREW COLES

Do you want to be a record breaker?

Update from the MX-5 Owners Club's Iain Fleming

BACK IN 2012 the Club took the bold step of setting a new world record. It was part of the Club's first ever motorsport weekend and it managed to officially make it into the Guinness Book of World Records with the largest parade of convertibles – 270 members became world record breakers!

Fast forward to 2019: it's the Club's 25th Anniversary and the 30th Anniversary of the MX-5, which seems like a great opportunity to set another record! So at the Spring Rally on 28th April at the Elvington Circuit near York, the Club will host not one, but two World Record attempts.

You are invited to come along and become a record breaker yourself. All MX-5 drivers and enthusiasts are welcome to attend the event, which is free. The gates will open at 09.30; all that is asked is that drivers arrive before 11am so that you can fill in the record registration forms and have a briefing, after



which the record attempts can get underway.

Ahead of the record attempt, those of you who like to drive as fast as you dare and find out what your MX-5 is capable of in a safe and legal environment, will be delighted that the Club is offering members the opportunity to 'run the runway'. You'll have the chance to hit your top speed or run head-to-head over a set distance. While Richard Hammond was a famous visitor to this circuit, you are encouraged to keep your speed below 288mph...

Following the record attempt the track will open for the remainder of the afternoon so that owners can put their cars through their paces on the circuit: whether you're a track novice or a veteran, there will be something for you.

If on-track thrills aren't for you, you can browse the multiple specialists and traders coming along, or make a visit to the adjacent Yorkshire Air Museum for a reduced gate fee of just £5 for all visitors direct from the Rally. See www.springrally.co.uk for up-to-the-minute event news.

Later in the year the Club will host the UK's MX-5 Anniversary Rally which will no doubt be the biggest event anywhere in the world for the car in 2019. Extending over two days with activities on the 14th and 15th of September at the fantastic British Motor Museum in Warwickshire, there is a huge programme of events, competitions, attractions and VIPs; visitors will also be able to enjoy the fantastic collection in the museum.

For the Anniversary event, Club members will get in free with a guest. For non-members entry on the day is likely to be £17 per person for the Rally and

museum. Club membership is just £35 per year* – it's a tremendous offer and with such a huge year for the MX-5, there has never been a better time to sign on the dotted line.

Events are just one part of a membership that caters for all aspects of MX-5 ownership and it brings many significant discounts and benefits, especially great deals from our insurance partners, discounts on parts and servicing, as well as various benefits across a wide range of suppliers. Plus there's a bi-monthly Club magazine, online knowledge base, calendar, discounted tickets, holiday packages and local events: the list continues to grow every year. To find out more about the Club and to join, please visit mx5oc.co.uk, or come along to a local meeting or any of our national events.

*First Year is currently £39.50: a one-off joining administration fee of £4.50 is charged on initial membership sign-up.

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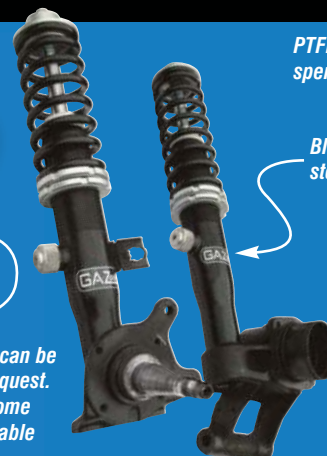


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- Lightweight billet alloy bases, end fittings, seats, lockrings, rod guides and gland nuts.
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LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL

As the MX-5 celebrates its 30th anniversary, we talk to Mazda UK's ex-PR manager, Tim Watson, about what it was like to launch an icon

Ah, hasn't the past 30 years just flown by? Hardly seems like three decades ago that the Berlin Wall came down, Nintendo began selling the Game Boy and the first episode of The Simpsons aired on TV. On the other hand, when you consider that in 1989 Ronald Reagan was turning over the Presidency of the USA to George H W Bush, and that Margaret Thatcher was still the British Prime Minister, maybe it does seem like a long time ago after all...

Of course, one of the more enduring and endearing arrivals of 1989 was the first generation Mazda MX-5, which made its global debut at the Chicago Auto Show 30 years ago. It was an instant and colossal hit. Around the world Mazda importers would have been rubbing their hands with glee and wondering where they could stash all the money that was about to come pouring through the showroom doors.

Back in 1989 Tim Watson was working as public relations manager for one of those importers, Mazda UK, and he was as excited as everyone else at the prospect of an affordable, reliable, cute-looking roadster that promised to be a blast to drive. His job was not only to launch the MX-5 to the UK motoring press, but also to drum up public fervour through motorsport activities and celebrity endorsements. It was a crazy time to be working for Mazda, as Tim recalls in this series of anecdotes about the MX-5.



The MX-5 wasn't the only Japanese sport car to be launched in the era, but it was the most successful by far

California screamin'

'We were briefed about the MX-5 back in 1988 and clearly we liked what we saw. But after the stunning reception the car received at Chicago early the following year, we knew we had a massive hit on our hands. And I was soon to experience the MX-5 effect first-hand.

'Car launch budgets were generous back then so we'd shipped a bunch of right-hand drive 323s to Laguna Seca in California and staged the British launch of the car out there. Yeah, I know... I'd asked my American colleagues for the loan of one of their press fleet cars for the six-week duration of our stay so that I could get around the place, and what shows up? A bright red Miata.

'It was a brilliant little car. Everything they had promised it would be, everything I hoped it would be. But I couldn't stop anywhere in it because the Americans were going nuts over it. The car was in such short supply and everyone wanted one, so I was forever being flagged down and people were thrusting cash at me and writing



Nine months before its UK launch, buyers were placing orders for the MX-5

out cheques – they wanted that car and they wanted it now! One of the national newspapers in the States, USA Today, ran a piece on the front page headlined 'Miata Fever'.

'My other memory from that trip was on one of my rare couple of days off, driving it into Death Valley. Almost killed myself because I had the top down. When I got back my face was as red as the bodywork.'

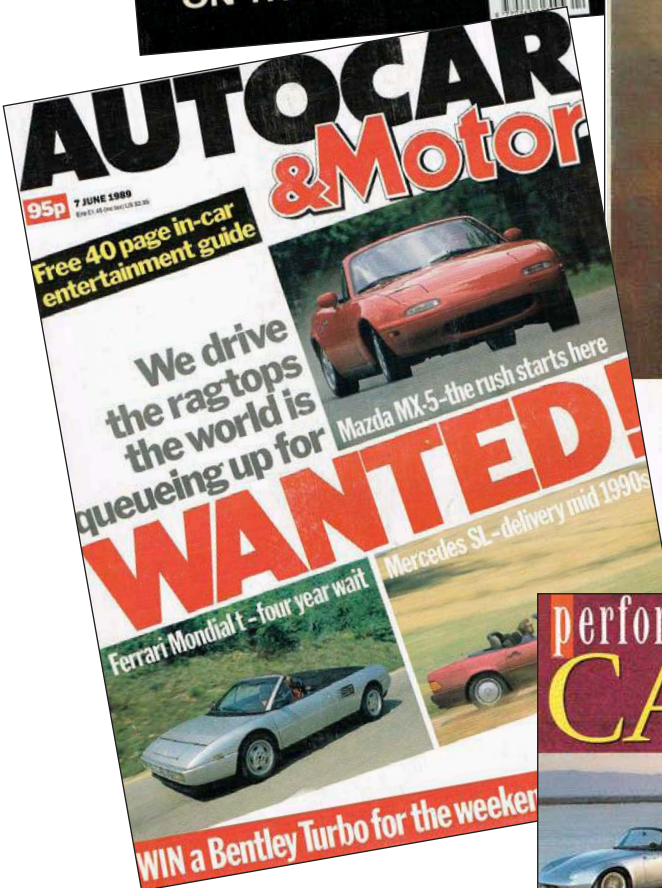
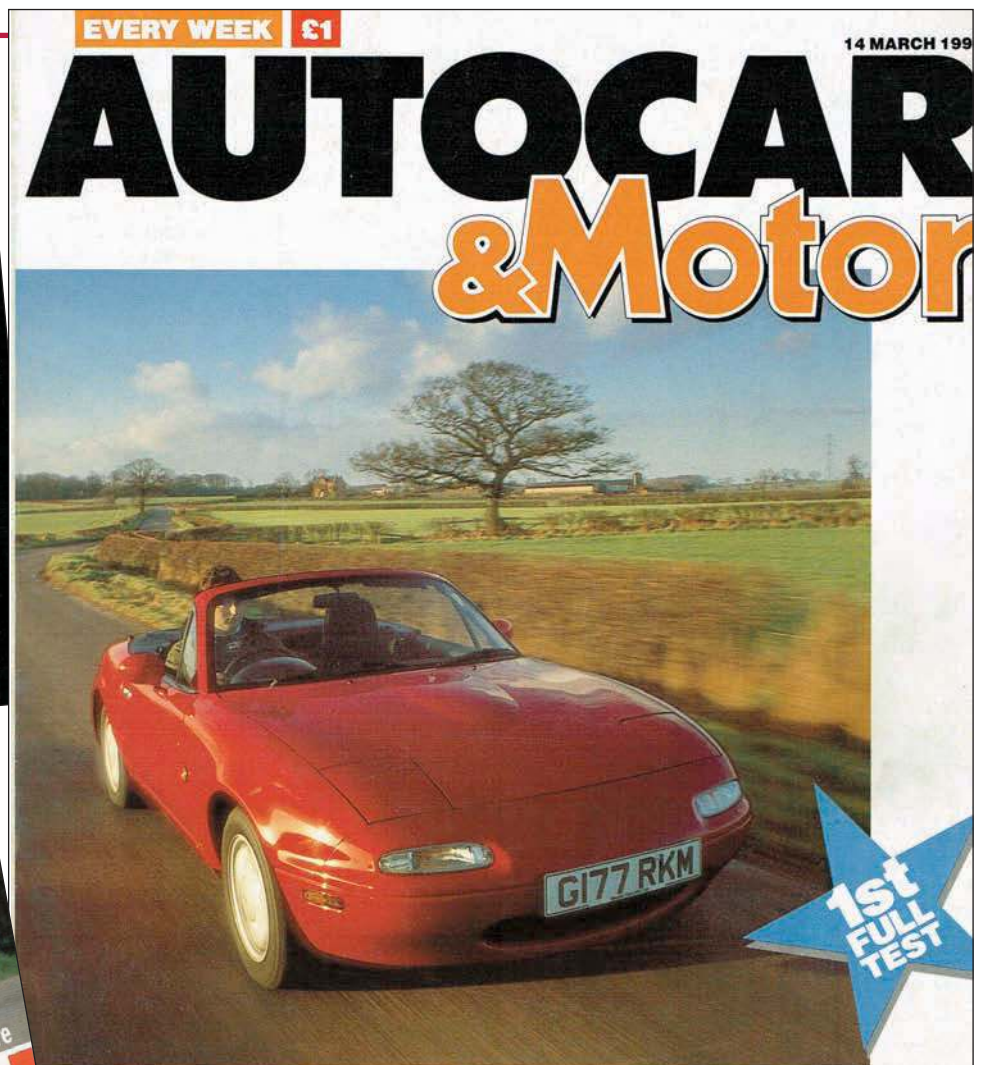
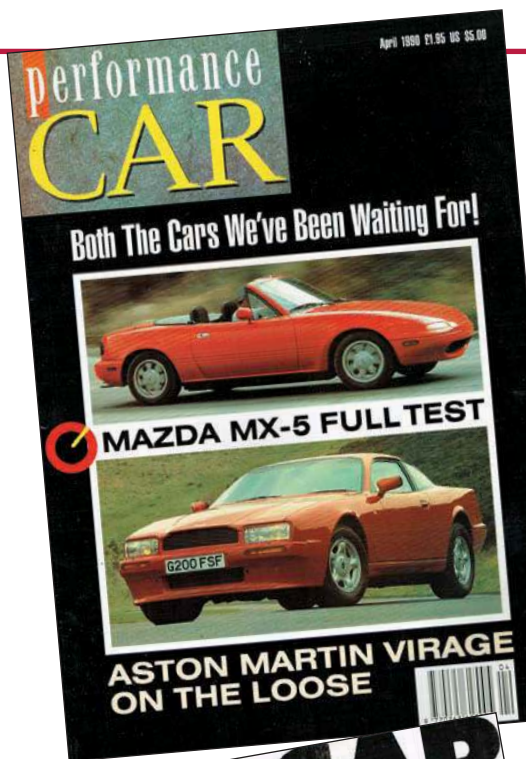
The UK launch. In Greece

'We were to launch the right-hand drive MX-5 to the UK motoring press early in 1990

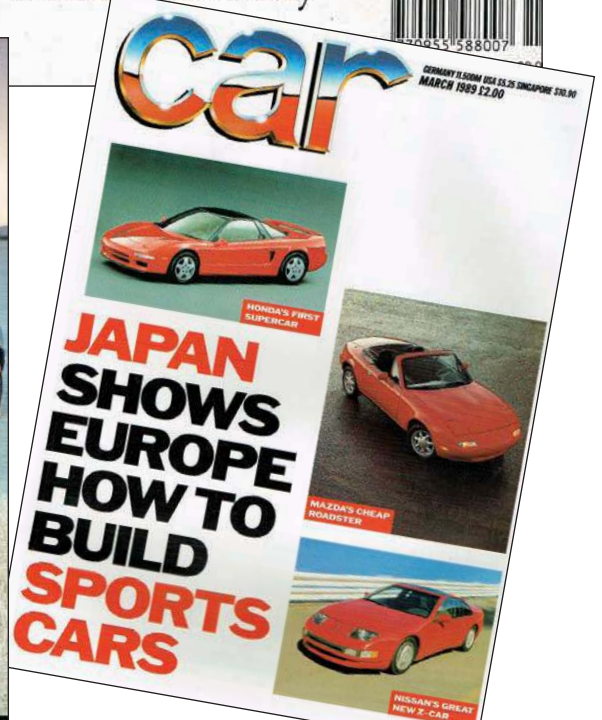
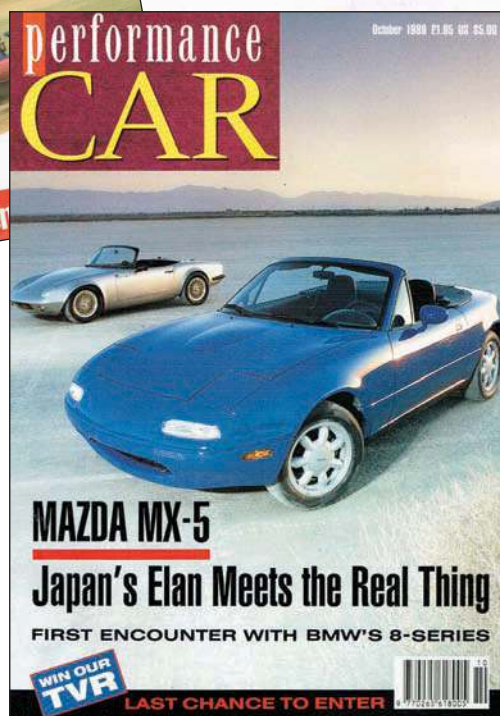
and rather than risk British weather, we decided to do the presentation in Greece where it would be reasonably warm and sunny. I did a recce in December 1989 and all seemed fine – the weather, the roads, the accommodation.

'When the journalists showed up in Greece they discovered something that I hadn't spotted on my recce – that the marble chippings the Greeks use to surface the roads are incredibly slippery, like ice. Luckily, although the journos described having some 'moments' there were no mishaps.

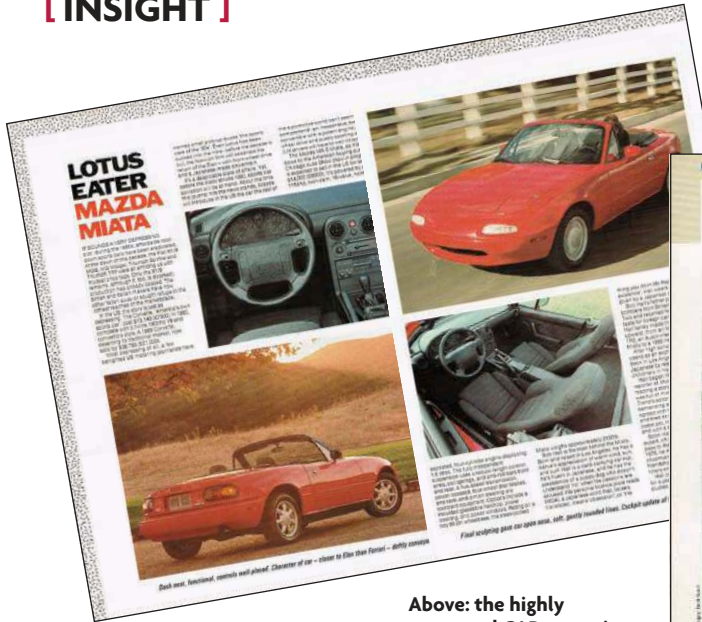
'However, when the press had



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The British motoring press was unanimous in its verdict on the MX-5: it was superb and was definitely going to be a winner for Mazda. Even some journo went out and bought one, a real tribute to the appeal of the car – with an endless stream of test cars, most of them didn't need a car of their own, but the ragtop Mazda was irresistible



Above: the highly respected CAR magazine was an early convert to the MX-5's charms



Above: Performance Car magazine was another enthusiastic advocate of the MX-5



gone we flew in the dealers, some of whom weren't so used to driving rear-wheel drive cars. On the last day of the dealer launch two of the guys who'd been barrelling along in a pair of MX-5s found some of the slippery stuff, spun off the road and hit a school bus that was dropping off some kids. Fortunately there were no injuries, but both cars were seriously damaged.

'Talking of injuries, I almost suffered some myself, although not in a car. The standard hotel lectern in Athens was wired up

as usual; light, microphone and slide projector connection. The lectern was metal. The system was plugged into an outlet in the wall. So was everything else – a bank of about 15 plugs from around the room all going into one outlet. Every time I touched the lectern or changed slides I got a really big electric shock. I battled through three media presentations and a dealer launch presentation before calling it a day and reading from my notes. Those were the days!

'We almost didn't get our 20 launch cars into Greece. Arranging to get them into the country involved a staggering amount of bureaucracy and Mazda's Greek importer was invaluable in helping to sort out the paperwork. But even though we'd done everything by the book, two days before the cars were due to be unloaded we were told that they wouldn't be allowed in until we'd done more paperwork. It took four days to arrange the new carnets and we had to lodge a deposit of



around £400,000.

'It was worth it, though, as the reviews from the journalists were almost 100 per cent positive. Except for one. The gentleman from the Birmingham Post complained that the MX-5 wasn't like an MGB or a Triumph Spitfire. I didn't have the strength to tell him that that was the whole point of the car...'

The X factor

'From the beginning there was a six-month waiting list for the MX-5 in the UK and that was the case for the whole of the first year. It was the car to be seen in and I started fielding lots of calls from celebrities asking if they could have one on loan.

'The actress Kate Beckinsale's agent was particularly keen that I should hand over a loan car, but I just had to insist that demand was so high it wasn't possible – we needed every car we could lay our hands on for paying customers. Ms Beckinsale, of course, went on to do quite well in Hollywood,

so perhaps I should have made an exception...

'Still, Jonathan Ross bought one, and several racing drivers wanted to get hold of one, too. There were even a couple of motoring journalists who laid down their own money on an MX-5. Frankly, at the time that car genuinely was a licence to print money.'

Circuit insanity

'Using the 20 press cars from the launch and five more sourced from elsewhere, I was responsible for setting up the BARC Mazda UK MX-5 Cup in 1990. I've done other race championships during the course of my career, but this was the most difficult I've ever been involved with.

'We encouraged the dealers to take part but they had no race experience and about 90 per cent of the drivers were amateurs who hadn't competed before. As a consequence the racing was bonkers. People were running into each other and spinning off the track left, right and



Above and top: rare pictures of MX-5 UK Cup cars not actually crashing...

centre. At Donington Park everyone was so badly behaved during the first race with countless crashes, that the Clerk of the Course banned us from staging the second race! I was forever writing letters of apology to the BARC about the dismal standard of driving.

'On the plus side, Mazda UK made a fortune in spare parts and replacement cars. Also, one of the few good drivers on the grid, Patrick Watts, won the 1990 championship which paved his way for a very

successful career in the BTCC.'

Turbo tale

'Soon after the MX-5 landed in the UK, Dave Brodie and Ken Brittain – of BBR fame – turned up on the doorstep with a plan to turbocharge the car. Dave was an excellent salesman and Ken a great engineer, and they proposed developing a turbo package at their own expense that we would then buy if we deemed it good enough.

'So we gave them a car to develop the kit on, and they



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went away and set to work. They did a really good job, but for our first drive of the development mule they'd clearly wound up the wick on the turbo to impress us. It felt like a regular MX-5 at 2000rpm, and at 3000, but at 4000rpm it rocketed off like an Exocet: it scared the hell out of me!

'And yet we could see the potential. So we asked BBR to tone down the power, tame the delivery, and make the conversion reliable enough that we could put a warranty on it. The production version drove very well, but its fundamental flaw was that we didn't also uprate the brakes and suspension.'

Argyle socks

'When the Mazda 787B won the 1991 Le Mans 24-hour race we were perhaps a little bit surprised given its Wankel engine's lack of reliability the previous season, but keen to celebrate the victory. It led to one of my greatest embarrassments...

'I had this wonderful idea to create a special edition, based on the BBR turbo car, that mimicked the distinctive livery of the Renown-sponsored race car. I persuaded the product marketing department it would be a good thing and in the concept sketches I showed



them it looked great. It would be called the Le Mans and we'd produce 24 of them, one for each hour of the race.

'But after we'd sprayed up the first couple I knew I'd made a mistake – it looked ridiculous, like a pair of Argyle socks. I quietly snuck off and pretended it was all the product marketing department's idea... I think we only sold about two of them at full price and the dealers struggled with the rest, some eventually respraying the cars in a single, more normal colour. You live and learn...'



Top: BBR Turbo was sold through dealerships and had a warranty

Above: Mazda asked BBR to tone down the power for production

The Le Mans: revered by some, just not by the bloke who dreamt it up...



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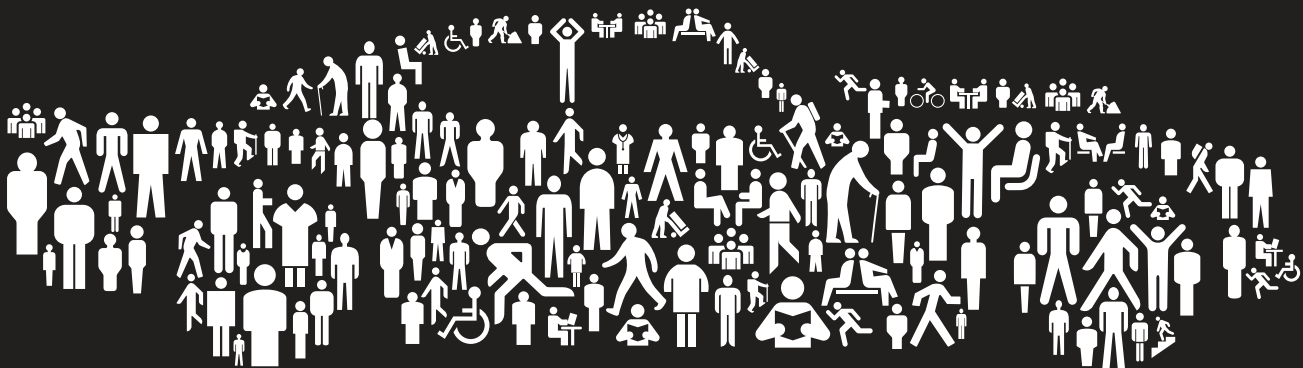
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The *real* cost of racing

Even a budget motorsport series can be a bigger drain on your pocket than you might imagine, as the BRSCC Mazda MX-5 Championship's Rookie of the Year 2018, Matt Pollard, discovered

Race photos: **Jonathan Elsey Motorsport Photography**

So, you want to go motor racing? Grand idea. It's fun. It's exhilarating. And it's the ultimate test of how good a driver you are. But where should you start? Well, a 'budget' series seems sensible, so you can find out if you really are as good as you think you are without bankrupting yourself in the process. Another virtue of a budget series is that the regs often decree that the cars are pretty much to the same near-standard specification, so that driving talent rather than the depth of your pockets is what makes the difference on track.

Among the various budget series and championships in the UK, the British Racing & Sports Car Club (BRSCC) Mazda MX-5 Championship for mk1 MX-5s has a sterling reputation. The cars are light, handle well, and generally are robust and comparatively easy on their mechanical components. Within the regulations you can't make many modifications, and those you can make

have to be with components from approved suppliers. The aim is to keep the cars and the racing as comparatively affordable as possible.

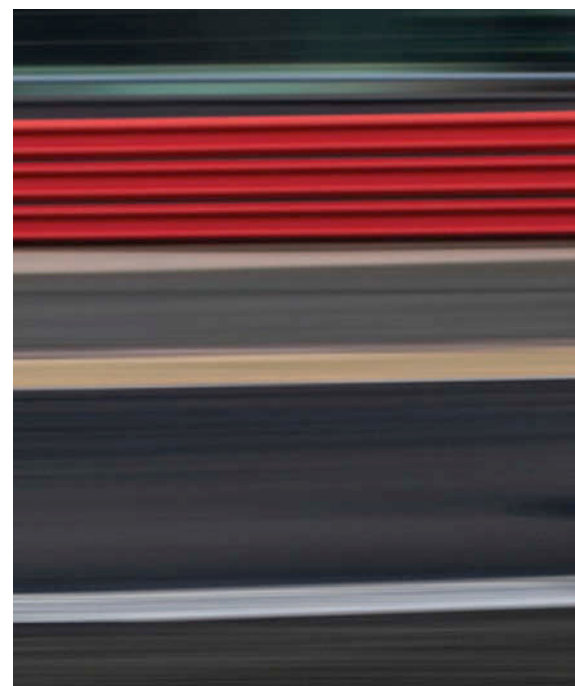
But what does 'affordable' actually mean? Matt Pollard can tell you. The 22-year-old was seduced by the prospect of racing after enjoying trackdays in his father's modified MX-5 mk3. So for the 2018 season he bought an already race-prepared mk1 in February, entered the fray of the BRSCC MX-5 Championship, and was rewarded with the Rookie of the Year title for his performance. He also wrote a blog (matthewpollard.co.uk) detailing everything that went on during the season, including what it all cost – we're in debt to Matt for allowing us to plunder his experience for this feature.

There will be some tutting, we're sure, from folk saying you can race an MX-5 much more cheaply than Matt has. And they're right, you can. But this is what Matt (and his father, Keith) have spent

Matt Pollard,
Rookie of the
Year 2018



You're going to
need racewear and
a good helmet





Matt in action at Donington Park: you can just make out the bodywork damage from the first lap of practice...



Finding a sponsor is no easy task, but financially is worth making the effort

[MOTORSPORT]

with the ambition of not merely competing, but of winning.

The race car itself - £5900

We'll start with the fun part, the car, the bit we all get most excited about. Matt bought a mk1 that had already been race-prepared for £3900. But it cost a further £2000 to bring it up to the specification required for the BRSCC MX-5 championship.

Racewear - £1200

Matt already had a helmet and gloves from his trackday outings – bank on at least £400 for a helmet and another £50–60 for gloves if you don't have them. As for the rest of the kit, Matt says: 'I went to the Autosport show and got a decent discount from Demon Tweeks on a package for around £1000 that included boots, balaclava, long johns, top, and a decent race suit.

Getting you ready

Go Racing Pack - £105

Includes the pre-ARDS (Association of Racing Drivers) test video and licence application form.

Pre-ARDS test instruction - £230

Not essential but Matt wanted to pass the test first time. 'You take the ARDS test in one of the MSV (Motor Sport Vision) cars – a front-wheel drive Peugeot, which is a bit different to a rear-drive MX-5, so I invested in a few practice laps before the test.'

ARDS test - £250

Says Matt: 'It's not difficult to pass. It's really intended to ensure that you know the rules of the track and are a safe and competent driver.'

Fees

BRSCC membership - £135

MX-5 Championship entry fee - £300

Entry fee per race - £425

Has to be paid in advance of the race to confirm your place.

Support costs (fuel, pads, race team, etc) - £1000 per race

You can, of course, look after your car yourself, but Matt doesn't have the time, the inclination, or the skills, to do so. So he has hired the services of an experienced race team to help: the team also stores his car between races and transports it to and from circuits.

'I'm using AB Motorsport to provide my race support,' he explains. 'Costs can vary according to whether it's a one-day

or two-day meeting and whether you do the test day on Friday.'

From Matt's perspective the other great advantage of using AB Motorsport is access to the team's wealth of knowledge. Ali Bray's race experience and knowledge of car set-up and racecraft is invaluable. The team supports leading drivers in the championship, who are all too happy to share what they know, and provide advice that might take years to learn on your own.

Costs Matt hadn't counted on...

Data logger - £1500

A vital piece of kit. 'Using the software you can compare your laps, or compare laps with another driver to see where you're gaining or losing time,' says Matt. 'We went for the Video VBox Lite from Racelogic who throw in a useful free half-day training on how to use the software.

'And if you're involved in any 'racing incidents', the stewards will be asking for the SD card from your data logger and reviewing the footage with you...'

Tyres - £1100

'You need to factor in three sets per season (possibly more), two sets of dry, one wet, at £368 per set from the approved supplier MOT Motorsport in 2018. The championship is switching to Avon in 2019 which should reduce the cost a little.'

Engine rebuild - £2000

'You never know what kind of MX-5 you've bought until it's out on track. Quite a lot of work had to be done to mine to bring it up to race speed.'

Damage - £2000 (covered by a sponsor)

'Sometimes it's your own fault [Matt hit the tyres at Oulton Park] and sometimes it's unavoidable. Fortunately I have a great bodywork sponsor, Car Magic, a body repair specialist from the Chesham/Berkhamsted area. This has been really helpful and saved quite a bit of cash. If you haven't got a sponsor and want to keep your car looking good, then you need to budget for new wings, panels and a respray over the course of the season.'

Test days - £200–300 per test day

'What they don't tell you when you sign up for the BRSCC is that if you want to test the car at the circuit on the Friday before the race meeting, it's going to cost you extra. It's way more expensive than a regular trackday and costs vary depending on the circuit.'

As well as investing in test days, Matt also coughed up for a few trackdays to get used to the car's behaviour before the season started.

Race underwear - £100 per set

One set of racing undercrackers may be insufficient if you're doing a day of testing and two days of qualifying and racing. Allow for one or two additional sets depending upon your approach to personal hygiene.

Accommodation, food, travel - ££££

These costs will vary enormously according to whether you're staying in hotels or camper vans, how much and





Set aside cash for unexpected stuff such as engine rebuilds

how well you eat and how far away the circuit is – if you’re towing your own race car, fuel can be a big factor. As Matt discovered, these can represent major expense and can mount up over the course of a season.

And finally...
Matt and his dad approached their first season of competitive motorsport with a budget of £15,000 in mind – Matt reckons they probably spent quite a bit more than that!

As long as Matt keeps away from the Armco, the 2019 season should work out cheaper – no car to fork out for, and engine rebuild, racewear and data logger already purchased. That said, when we met him at a pre-season Brands Hatch test day, Matt did proudly show us his lovely new Sparco race seat...

Despite the considerable expense of racing, though, last season’s Rookie of the Year has silverware in his sights for 2019. We wish him every success. 🏆



With safety kit, spend as much as you can



Championship switches to Avon tyres in 2019



The MX-5 is light on tyres and fuel, but...



Make sure your sponsor knows you love them...

BRSCC MAZDA MX-5 CHAMPIONSHIP 2019 RACE CALENDAR	
VENUE	DATES
Brands Hatch	23–24 March
Pembrey	20–21 April
Cadwell Park	11–12 May
Anglesey	8–9 June
Snetterton 300	29–30 June
Oulton Park	3 August
Donington Park	17–18 August
Silverstone International	5–6 October
(All venues will be running a three-race format.)	

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2011/11 2.0i Sport Tech Coupe Folding Hardtop, Hi Spec, 6 Spd, Only 32K Miles £8990



2016/16 2.0i Sport Nav Roadster New Hi Spec, 6spd, Only 15,000 Miles £15990



2013/13 2.0i Sport Tech Nav Coupe Folding Hardtop, Hi Spec, Only 16,000 Miles £12490



2017/17 2.0i Sport Nav Roadster New 6 Spd, Hi Spec, Only 15,000 Miles £16990



2017/66 2.0 Sport Nav Roadster Hi Spec, 6 Spd, Only 9,000 Miles £16990



2016/66 1.5 Sport Icon Sp/edition New Shape Roadster, Only 7,000 Miles £15990

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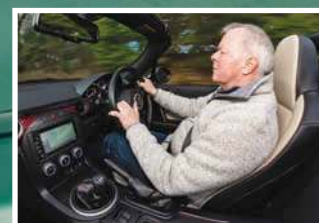
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[30TH ANNIVERSARY]



The importance of family



For three decades the MX-5 has thrilled drivers the world over. As part of the car's 30th anniversary celebrations, we pay a visit to Mazda UK's Heritage Fleet, where all four generations are represented

Aniversaries. Motoring journalists rely on them for an endlessly-recurring stream of stories, car manufacturers for special editions and excuses for media events. In the world of the MX-5 there has been much anniversary activity over the years, with plenty more to come this year as the breed reaches 30 years of age.

All of which has given Mazda the perfect justification for building up a heritage fleet. A lot of car manufacturers do this, of course, both to establish a record of their history in metal, rubber, glass and plastic, and to make sure the motoring public knows about that history through events and press coverage. And

in 2009 Mazda UK decided to get in on the act, in a big way.

That was the year the MX-5 turned 20, and to celebrate that fact Mazda UK acquired 10 1.6-litre mk1s, rendered them all fit enough to let journalists loose in them, and shipped them to Scotland for a celebratory event which also involved a posse of new mk3s. 'Wheeler Dealer' Mike Brewer was the man who rounded up the cars on Mazda's behalf, via various ads and trade contacts. There were several red ones, a blue one which drove very nicely and proved very popular for subsequent press loans, while black, dark green and white were also represented. Worst was the white

one, ruined with low-riding aftermarket suspension and close to intolerable on the spectacular but lumpy imperfect roads by the event's hotel.

So, what happened to them? 'They were not the best examples around,' admits Graeme Fudge, Mazda UK's head of PR, 'but they served their purpose. The company storing them left the roofs and windows open, and a few bits got taken off. One journalist, mentioning no names, was keen to buy the best red one, but another much younger journalist crashed it before that could happen. It turned out he hadn't previously driven a car lacking traction control, anti-lock brakes and so on.



'In the end we made the remaining cars usable and sold them for £1 each to the Mission Motorsport charity. They then used them as race cars and for training activities.'

Given the publicity and goodwill that the MX-5 fleet had generated, it made sense to start building up a proper heritage fleet of historically interesting Mazdas. Now the fleet numbers around 20 cars; some have come and gone between 2009 and now, while there are several more that Mazda would like to acquire should good examples become available at some point.

Photographer Fraser and I recently spent a very enjoyable day at Jota

Motorsport, which now looks after the cars, with Mazda's PR manager and ace racing driver Owen Mildenhall. Naturally our focus was on the MX-5s, of which seven out of the fleet's nine were present. One of the missing cars, a white 1990 mk1 in very fine condition, was away at the company's head office in Dartford beautifying the entrance foyer.

Some of the MX-5s are regularly lent out to journalists, while others are kept back for promotional events or simply kept because they have a story to tell. We looked over them all, and we drove the four oldest ones. I'll tell you their stories in a minute but, first, how did Mazda UK come by these particular cars?

'We knew the 25th anniversary was coming up,' explains Graeme Fudge, 'so in 2013 we started looking for really good mk1s, mk2s and mk3s. Dave Pavely – he used to work for Honda, then Sparco, and his daughter has raced for us – and I sat down and went through everything we needed for the fleet.'

'He then started looking for good examples on the internet, and we got a whole range of MX-5s in time for our display at the 2015 Goodwood Festival of Speed. We had a Lotus Elan and an MGB there, too. Dave and Jota Motorsport have done quite a lot of refurbishing work on the cars.'

Here, then, are our seven cars' stories.



MX-5 BBR TURBO LE MANS EDITION
October 1991
1352 miles

Yes, you read that mileage correctly. This Holy Grail of mk1s, one of 24 built to celebrate the similarly-colourful, rotary-engined Mazda 787B's victory in the 1991 Le Mans 24 Hours, was a post-Goodwood acquisition. Mazda also has another one, which Graeme describes as 'a bit tired', but this one is daisy-fresh. It was taken to Majorca by its owner shortly after purchase, kept in a dehumidified garage and hardly ever used. 'When we came to buy it,' says Graeme, 'its owner was insistent that we treat it with the same respect. He was tremendously proud of it.'

You can see why: it's an absolutely pristine time-warp machine. Sitting in it is like being in my own Eunos with the focus sharpened and the contrast turned up, everything fitting perfectly, moving smoothly with no slack, exuding newness. That's how it drives, too: taut, smooth, rattle-free and a perfect reference for how a mk1 should feel. And, of course, it goes with extra punch, thanks to having 150bhp – progressively delivered, with a wastegate chirrup when you lift off – instead of 114. I added about 10 miles to the odometer, and now feel a bit guilty. That colour scheme certainly attracts attention, though.



MX-5 1.8 BASE MODEL,
May 1996
41,000 miles

I first drove this car in 2015, at the UK launch of the MX-5 mk4 in Scotland – the same venue, Torridon House, used for that 20th-anniversary event. N764 TPR was mechanically identical to the first MX-5 I owned, complete with no power steering. That lack reminded me how much of the mk1's innate responsiveness is lost when fitted with the manual steering rack, and the whole car felt a bit loose and tired.

Since then, though, it's had a thorough suspension refreshment – springs, dampers, bushes – and the feel is almost unrecognisable. I've never known a non-PAS mk1's steering feel as keen and crisp as this one's, and the whole car is a lively joy. It's tidy rather than immaculate; Owen describes it as 'a workhorse car'.



[30TH ANNIVERSARY]

MX-5 MK2 10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

April 1999

71,768 miles

This was another acquisition by Dave Pavely for the 2014 Goodwood Festival of Speed, and the car features in Steve Bennett's Road Trip story elsewhere in this issue. 'It needed a bit of work underneath and in the sills,' Graeme reports; it has also had a recent suspension refreshment and feels pretty fit, apart from a missing footrest.

It's a nicely-detailed car with its colour-coordinated hood, its two-tone leather seats and its chromed wheels, and it shares the job of representing the NB generation with a 2003 mk2.5 'Angels' Edition in silver, also acquired for 2014 and one of a run of 500. Angels? Think Charlie's Angels and the Full Throttle movie, if you can bear to...



MK3 RACE CAR

2010

6475 miles (indicated: probably much more)

There were two of these, originally built as the UK entry for an endurance race at northern Italy's Adria circuit which involved teams of journalists from all over the world. I drove one of them in that race, and again in an ice race in Sweden the following year, so there's a chance I've driven this car as fast as I could. After that it gained a new, tougher roll-cage and took part, over the next few years, in three Britcar 24-hour races, two Birkett six-hour races and plenty of trackdays as well.

Its engine and gearbox are standard (and original), the suspension is slightly stiffer and there have been several colour schemes on what, deep down, was once a dark metallic grey car. The cockpit, with its lightweight carbonfibre door trims, shows signs of hard and enthusiastic use, especially on the worn steering wheel, and the car has been dormant for a while. The plan for this most reliable and faithful of race cars is to get it going again. Why? So people can have some more fun in it, of course.





MX-5 GT4 RACE CAR 2012

'This,' enthuses Owen Mildenhall, who raced it, 'is the fastest MX-5 ever made. It's also the hottest car I've ever raced. It used to melt my racing boots, because the turbo is close to the bulkhead and the exhaust goes down the middle.'

It's a one-off, the only MX-5 ever built to GT4 regulations, which competed in all rounds bar the first one of the 2012 British GT Championship, including a race at the Nürburgring. It scored two podium finishes, too: a second place and a third. 'It had potential,' says Owen, 'but needed more development and there weren't the funds to do it.'

Its Mountune-built 2.0-litre engine is based on the standard unit but, thanks to its hefty turbocharger, produces 320bhp at 7200rpm which is sent through a six-speed sequential Hewland gearbox with paddle-shifts. The screen and windows are polycarbonate, the doors are carbonfibre, the engine is mounted lower and further back, and no opportunity is wasted to get air into the engine bay and onto the brakes. Even the front badge is cut out between the chrome bits.

This is a full-on racing car with all the right bits, including traction control (but no anti-lock for the brakes). Currently it's a bit incomplete, awaiting reassembly, but who knows what it might have achieved, given the budget?



MX-5 MK3 25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION June 2014 5506 miles

A total of 1099 examples of this Soul Red, 2.0-litre, Roadster Coupé were made, with a remarkable 749 sent to the UK: on the secondhand market these folding hardtop models remain hugely popular, admired because their tin roof closely mimics the lines of the cloth hood. Mazda UK's own example is number one, confirmed on a plaque, and it came directly from the press test fleet. It looks very striking with its gloss-black detailing, which extends to the retractable hardtop, and of course it drives almost like a new car. There can hardly be a mk3 fresher than this one.





MX-5 MK4 RF LAUNCH EDITION

February 2017

3070 miles

Again in Soul Red, again number one – this time of 500. The Launch Edition, featuring the best of the Retractable Fastback equipment list and the earlier 160bhp 2.0-litre engine, could be had in this red or the metallic grey favoured by most buyers; had I been one of those buyers, I'd have had the red because it looks terrific. Like the mk3 adjacent, this mk4 illustrates Mazda's policy since 2014 of keeping back a key example of each new model. 'This forward planning is much easier than trying to find a good example years later,' Graeme reveals.



AND ALSO...

Mazda's fleet also contains first and last-generation RX-7s, an RX-8 and, intriguingly, a very feisty RX-3 and an ultra-rare Cosmo from 1968. There used to be two Xedos 6s, but they weren't in great shape and have now gone. So have an MX-6 and a later, triple-rotor Cosmo: 'The first car with factory sat-nav,' Owen reveals. The little V6-engined MX-3 coupé is a cracker, though, and a CX-5 and a brand-new Mazda 3 have just joined the collection. A 30th Anniversary MX-5 will soon arrive, too. 'All the fleet demonstrates that technology and design are part of Mazda's DNA,' Graeme insists. 'It's about cars with the right power giving the right driving pleasure; we're not about autonomous cars or anything like that. Our engineers have been really clever over the years.'

'The reason for having a fleet of MX-5s is that the model has been one of the most enduring of all, and it's important to demonstrate that the MX-5 has been an evolution, not a revolution. You can see that when you put all four generations together, even if the line did get a bit chubbier in middle age.'

Graeme says that Mazda UK is always on the look-out for cars to add to the heritage fleet, but they must be really good examples.

'We should have a second generation RX-7,' he reckons, 'and we should have another really good mk1 MX-5. We'd like one of those very pretty Luce saloons from the 1960s, too.'

So if you happen to come across one, tell us and we'll let Graeme know. 📧



The Power of Friendship

Oli Matthews's mk1 is supercharged, but his friend Rob Long went down the turbocharger route. Here Oli explains what each of them has had done, and what the cars are like to drive
Photographs: **Brett Fraser**

My mate Rob bought his mk1 in 2016 having been on the hunt for a good condition 1.8iS for a while. He wanted an unmolested low-mileage UK car with as many mod cons as possible. PAS, electric windows, central locking were all essentials but which most mk1s lacked. He'd owned a 1.8 mk1 and a mk2.5 in his early 20s, but sold them wanting more performance, comfort and practicality.

Rob kindly insured me to drive it while he was away on business and I was immediately hooked. I'd had some interesting cars, but never an MX-5, and never a convertible. I absolutely loved the simplicity, the tactility and the way it made me feel. I needed one of my own.

I didn't get mine until more than a year later, by which time Rob had had his turbocharged and carried out many 'essential' modifications. He originally wanted to supercharge his car, but was persuaded that the turbo conversion was simpler, less expensive and had the potential to deliver bigger gains. And with a turbo conversion, there's greater scope for increasing the power later on, if so desired. After lots of reading and conversations with the main tuning companies, he settled on G19 Engineering's drive-in-drive-out TD04 turbocharging kit.

He loved it, and I did too. I'd never driven anything that felt as ballistic, even compared with an Elise, but while it was an animal and amazing fun, it felt to me that it had lost some of the original car's character. Everything happened all of a sudden and the whooshing soundtrack made me feel a bit self-conscious. It was harder to drive around town, and generally a bit more conspicuous. I was convinced that when I found my car, it would stay normally aspirated (particularly as I could still borrow Rob's for a manic blast from time to time).

I had always planned that the car I

bought would be something I could use any time. It needed to be a subtle colour and not draw attention on the school run or in the work car park. I went to see several before settling on a 1996 low-mileage 1.8-litre Eunos. It was a low-owner car which while not having been particularly pampered, had a good history and no welding.

Both Rob and I wanted our cars to be practical for mainly road use. While we didn't intend them to have the same spec, we settled on lots of the same components because they were right for the job. V-MAXX suspension was relatively cheap, highly regarded by Michael at Cleverley Repaired Cars, but compliant and height adjustable. On mk2 top mounts it also gave more travel and comfort. TR Lane TT style roll hoops proved some added rollover protection and stiffness while not looking too much like a track car, and with the added



Rob Long: turbo fan





Oli Matthews: supercharger man

benefit of still being able to drop or raise the hood while seated. Rob's been through four different sets of wheels on his car and I've had three. We both concluded that the right offset and low weight was really important to the way the car rides and handles. The OZ Superleggera wheels took a while to find but are very light and kind of age appropriate. As with the other mods, we wanted to keep the look subtle.

While we both sourced the best cars we could find, within a year it was clear that both would need the dreaded rear arch and sill repairs before too long, so in 2018 they went in for surgery.

That was how things would have stayed if I hadn't just felt the itch to make mine a bit quicker. I knew I didn't want a turbo, but I wanted to turn my car up to 11. Or maybe 15. The same, but more so. There was no way I could justify a big engine conversion, and that would mean a change of character, too. >>

[SUPERCHARGING V TURBOCHARGING]



ROB'S TURBOCHARGED 1.8iS

Engine

ME221 ECU tuned by Hybrid Tune
 G19 electronic boost controller (200/250bhp)
 G19 TD04-13T turbo (reconditioned)
 Mazda RX-8 yellow injectors
 G19 manifold, downpipe and separate sports cat
 G19 intercooler and pipework
 G19 uprated fuel pump
 Forge recirculating dump valve
 Ramair filter
 Cobalt stainless exhaust with custom small diameter tailpipe

Drivetrain

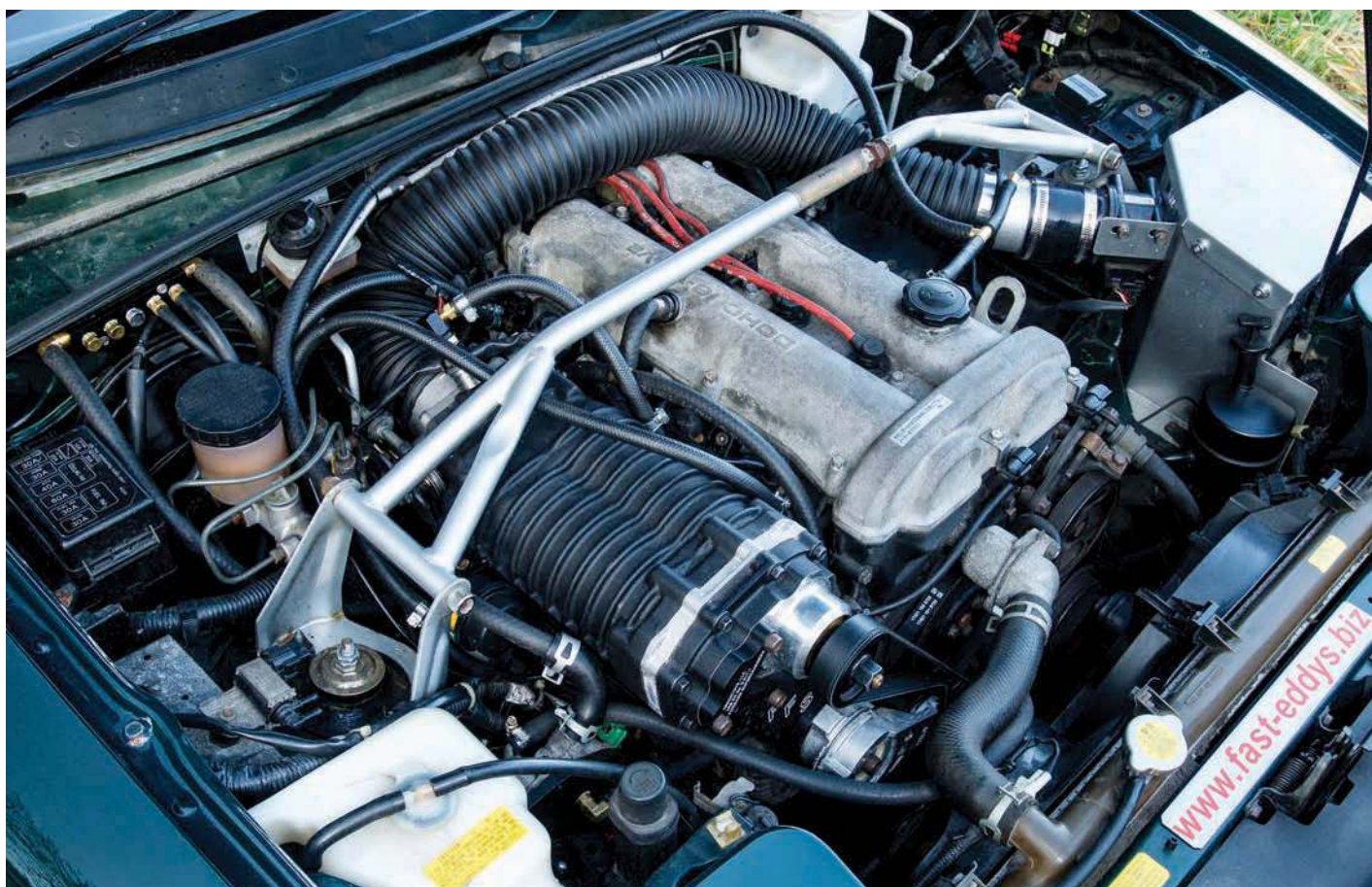
Competition Clutch stage 4 clutch (bit noisy)
 Competition Clutch lightweight flywheel
 Standard five-speed gearbox

Chassis

V-MAXX coilovers with mk2 top mounts
 Fast-road alignment by Michael Cleverley
 Jackson Racing upgraded front and rear anti-roll bars and poly bushes
 IL Motorsport drop links with poly bush inserts
 Michelin Pilot Sport 3 tyres
 OZ Superleggera wheels, 7x15 et37, refurbished

Brakes

EBC discs, black with grooves
 EBC Yellow Stuff/Green Stuff pads front/rear
 Goodridge braided hoses, front and rear



OLI'S SUPERCHARGED 1.8

Engine

Fast Forward Magnusson MP62 supercharger kit: produces 206bhp and 168lb ft
Standard ECU with three piggyback cards, tuned by Hybrid Tune
Standard injectors and exhaust manifold
Standard exhaust system with Mazdaspeed back-box

Drivetrain

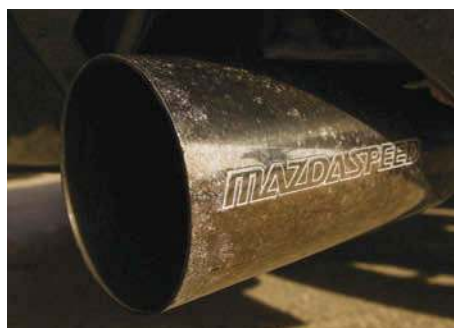
Standard clutch (original and still healthy), and standard five-speed gearbox
Torsen type 2 differential

Chassis

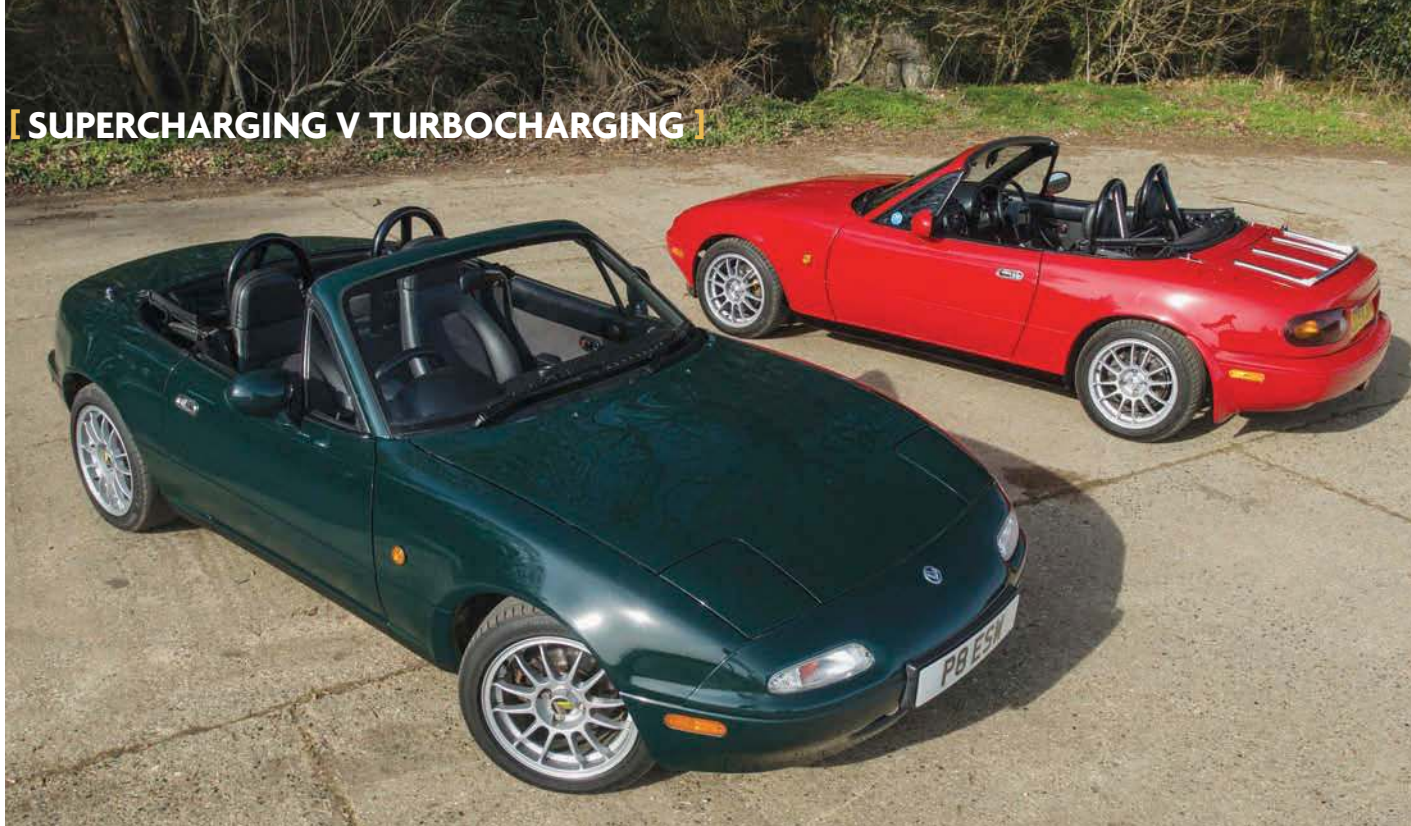
V-MAXX coilovers with mk2 top mounts
Fast road alignment by Michael Cleverley
Goodyear Efficientgrip 195/50 R15 tyres
OZ Superlegerra wheels 7x15 et37

Brakes

Standard discs and pads, Davefab brake brace stopper



[SUPERCHARGING V TURBOCHARGING]



<< Supercharging was the obvious route. Having scoured eBay and Facebook for cheap M45 kit, I was lucky to spot someone selling a brand new and unfitted Fast Forward Superchargers cold side MP62 kit. It was for sale locally and for a fraction of what it would have cost to import from the USA.

Fast Forward has been building and supporting its thoroughly engineered kit for more than 10 years, with well over 500 fitted worldwide. They're different from the more common mini-based kits in that a big charger mounts directly to a custom inlet manifold, providing instant throttle response but with no room for an intercooler. This is overcome by a fifth injector that sprays petrol in ahead of the supercharger, cooling the air and providing additional fuelling.

Having met local engine and track car specialist Fast Eddy at an MX-5 club event, he was an obvious person to fit the kit. With excellent support from Tom at Fast Forward in Arizona, Eddy painstakingly installed it with the aim of making it pretty much fit and forget.

After the odd shakedown niggles I'm very much hoping that's the case. With several Fast Forward supercharger kits having covered over 100,000 trouble-free miles in the States, it seems very likely.

Unlike Rob's turbo, which uses the latest ME221 engine management, my kit uses the standard ECU but with three 'old school' piggyback cards to control boost, timing and the fifth injector. It works brilliantly though, with a flat torque curve and completely linear power delivery to the red line (and way past if I let it). Both cars were mapped by Hybrid Tune in Horham, near Eye, who overlaid the graphs for both cars. It showed that the turbo car has more power and torque everywhere, with 45bhp more at the top end.

While the two cars have very different power delivery characteristics, they are remarkably well matched on the road. What the supercharger lacks in outright power it makes up for in tractability. There's no denying that the turbo is the quicker car though, and that was always going to be the case. What the Fast

Forward supercharger gives is instant but civilised pace. Below 3000rpm it uses the standard ECU's map, so around town it drives and sounds like stock. By the time it gets to the red line, however, it sounds like a diving Spitfire.

The great thing is that we both got what we wanted. Both approaches work really well but feel really different doing it. We're lucky enough (and old enough) to be insured to drive each other's cars, so if ever we have any doubts about our choices we can just swap over for a while. I'm sure that Rob's will get faster over time, but I don't think I'll be tempted to make mine any quicker: I think it's in the sweet spot right now. The plan is that it will be my daily driver for the next few years, so I need to keep it fairly sensible. ☺

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[ROAD TRIP]

Out of the **blue**



Exploring the Yorkshire Dales in Mazda's 10th Anniversary mk2. Fun? You bet, particularly as the weather and 'Mr Blue Sky' came along for the ride

Words: **Steve Bennett** Pictures: **Antony Fraser**





What a difference a year makes. Well, yes, of course it makes a difference, it's a whole bloomin' year! But in late February 2019, that was the line trotted out time and time again to illustrate the big freak weather story, as we basked in unseasonable sunshine and Kew Gardens hit 21 degrees. Of course, the big climate comparison was the 'Beast from the East' which had battered Blighty 12 months previously. And it was 12 months to the issue that we had the 'Beast' on our backs for our 'Northern Exposure' road trip, taking in Yorkshire's rugged North East in the wonderful V6 Rocketeer. It were reet parky, as the local folk might possibly say. Or possibly not.

Wow, what a difference a year makes! Sorry, couldn't resist... We are, you see, back in Yorkshire. As 'God's own county' and as the UK's biggest county to boot, it's worth another trip, so we're going to explore the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the Pennines and even stray into Cumbria. And 12 months down the line our trip coincides with the big good weather news story, which doesn't have its own snappy headline name, but which could perhaps be summed up as 'this isn't right in February, but it's very nice, thank you very much.'

on RX-7s of a similar vintage. Complementing the blue are polished 15in wheels, that are just on the right side of bling. Inside, black leather seats get blue Alcantara inserts, the Nardi wheel is part blue leather, as is the leather gearlever gaiter and Nardi gear knob. Ooh, and there's some stick-on carbon and the chrome around the instruments and vents. Any more blue? Yes, the carpets and even the hood, which is a complementary navy blue and very smart, too.

Any more 10th Anniversary facts and figures in this the MX-5's 30th year? Well, yes, since you asked. Just 7500 were built, of which 600 came to the UK. Needless to say the US took the most at 3000, while the home market – Japan – took just 500. And if you did buy one new, then you would have received his 'n' hers matching Seiko watches and a miniature scale model version, too. Neat, huh? And it would have cost you £21,100 back in 1999, which makes the current MX-5 an absolute bargain and is a reminder of just how expensive cars were back then.

This is the third time we've road-tripped a mk2. Back in the very first issue of *Total MX-5*, it was my very own green machine, which has now – sadly –

“ Two days exploring in the Dales, roof down in a Mazda MX-5 that's as deep a blue as the bluest sky I've ever seen, is pretty much as good as it gets ”

And I can tell you from years of experience, that it isn't right. My close family live on the edge of the Dales and in February it's not unusual for there to be snow on the high ground. Stunning and scenic it may be, but it's usually cold and frequently raining, all year round. It's no surprise that, after 30 years of this, they're all planning on moving to Cornwall...

But hey, we're not complaining. Two days exploring in the Dales, roof down in a Mazda MX-5, that's as deep a blue as the bluest sky I've ever seen, is pretty much as good as it gets. In fact we should be playing ELO's Mr Blue Sky on a loop. "Hey there Mr Blue, we're so pleased to be with you..." Does it get much better? Probably not.

And what is our chosen chariot exactly? Well, it's a 10th Anniversary 1.8S mk2 from the Mazda Heritage fleet. And that deep blue is actually called Innocent Blue Mica, a colour also used

been recycled into whatever it is cars are recycled into. Baked bean tins perhaps? A few issues on, we used an Angels special edition to go in search of Mike Hawthorn in the leafy lanes of Surrey and Sussex.

The mk2 is going through a bit of a rough patch at the moment. Or should that be a rusty patch? They are being culled at an alarming rate, as rot takes hold from the inside out, a legacy of Mazda's not particularly effective rust proofing, the mk2's double-skinned construction, and the UK's awful, salted winter roads. It's painful to watch, but as I know from my own experience a proper repair is beyond most mk2's ultimate value, and their values are being crushed by the rust issues. A perfect corrosive circle then. And such a shame, because the mk2 in so many ways is the best of the bunch. But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

There's certainly no rot in Mazda's own



Above: Now that's the definition of a 'Dale.' And the Yorkshire Dales National Park has plenty of them

Far right top: Idyllic is about right

Far right: A quick pit stop at the Tan Hill Inn, which is the UK's highest pub at 1732ft above sea level

Right: The MX-5 is the perfect size for the Dales' roads and the odd 25% hairpin

Below: Kilnsey Crag is typical of the Yorkshire terrain







“ And so to the Dales National Park, 841 square miles of designated natural beauty ”

Heritage fleet machine, although as we learn from John Simister's fleet feature in this issue, it has had some attention to the sills to bring it up to scratch. In other areas it's pretty much perfect, thanks to a recent suspension refresh and some nearly new Michelins. MX-5 drivetrains are rarely found wanting. With 71,000 miles on the clock this 138bhp 1.8 is full of fizz and kept fizzy by the standard Sport-spec six-speed gearbox. Both are going to get something of a workout. No, actually, make that a sound thrashing.

But first there's a gentle run up the A1, with the roof up so that we can hear the radio. Well, we don't want to miss Pop Master do we? 'We' of course being myself and resident Super Snapper Fraser, whose knowledge of pop trivia beats my own this occasion, while we both lament the fact that once the questions go beyond the mid '90s we haven't got a clue. Beyond that, we entertain ourselves with time well spent on the endlessly fascinating 'How many left' website (www.howmanyleft.co.uk), according to which, of the 700 10th Anniversary MX-5s that came in to the UK, there are 597 left, which has to be pretty good going we reckon. Certainly rather better than the three Lancia Gammas that remain taxed for road use in this country...

And so in to the Dales National Park, 841 square miles of designated natural beauty. The definition of Dale? Open valley, that's what. With the roof flung back we head in from the north side via Leyburn on the A684. It's mid-afternoon and we'd like to get some pics in the can before heading to our overnight digs in Harrogate. The scenic market town of Hawes is in the middle of the Dales and leading out of Hawes to the north is the The Buttertubs, or Buttertubs Pass as it's better known, connecting Hawes to the village of Thwaite. I've never driven it, but it's one of those must-do roads, so that's where we head first.

I say I've never driven, but I have cycled it. It was on the route for the Tour de France when it started in Yorkshire in 2014, although in Tour de France parlance it's called 'Cote de

Buttertubs.' Whatever, it was on the TdF route because it's a vicious climb peaking at 25%. That's a struggle on two wheels, and it's a struggle in parts for a dinky little MX-5. But once peaked the road undulates over Swaledale at some altitude, where the mk2 is in its element, going with the flow and just the perfect size for the narrow Tarmac ribbon.

The road is eerily quiet, until we clatter over a cattle grid and come across a lurid Viper Green Porsche 911 GT3 and one of those funky new Alpine Renaults. Turns out it's some fellow hacks from *evo* magazine, so we stop for a chat, kick some tyres and carry on our way. We'll be back this way for more action, but right now we fancy a drink and the Tan Hill Inn is not far up the road. It's the highest pub in the UK at 1732ft above sea level, so you might not want to have too many shandies at that altitude.

From Thwaite the route starts at ground level, meandering through woodland and passed babbling brooks, before a sharp series of switchbacks at 25% denotes the start of a steady climb across open moorland all the way to Tan Hill and the pub. Yes, I've cycled up here too, before we launched *Total MX-5*. When I got to the pub, as well as some other mad bikers and some Land Rovers (everyone drives a Landie in the Dales), there was a gaggle of MX-5s. It was one of those 'we really must do an MX-5 magazine moments.' Where there's a great road and a great view, there are always some MX-5s and some cheerful MX-5 owners. Although, on this occasion, it's just us, but then it is late afternoon on a Monday... Still, we grab a Coke and take a break, marvelling at the pub's very own snowcat and huge power generator housed in its own building.

The sun is starting to drop. We want to get a sunset shot at the Ribbleshead Viaduct, so soon we're on our way, charging back over the Buttertubs Pass, into Hawes and on to the B6255, a fabulously fast stretch that has the Mazda buzzing in sixth for prolonged periods as we chase down the sun's rapid fall.

The Ribbleshead viaduct is one of those defining Yorkshire Dales landmarks. At 32m high it straddles the low moorland for 400m and was quite the feat of engineering when built between 1870 and 1875. It's also defined by its location,



Top: Cresting the Buttertubs Pass

Innocent Blue Mica as Mazda calls it

Left: The obligatory sunset shot at the Ribbleshead viaduct complements the deep blue metallic, or

Below: The long and steep way down. Camera has a habit of flattening things out, but it's a 25% descent



[ROAD TRIP]

which is roughly in the middle of the Dales' Three Peaks: Pen-Y-Ghent, Ingleborough and Wharfedale. No time to climb that lot, although many do. No, we'll watch the sun go down, beaming the last rays of the day through the arches. It would almost be romantic if I was with anyone other than Snapper Fraser. Still, it's certainly atmospheric!

Done for the day and we head for Harrogate. It's a bit of a trek, but we want to experience Yorkshire's grandest spa town and have a curry! Yes, I know, we are just savages. Besides, for a bit of refinement, we're lodging at Harrogate's Majestic Hotel. I'm expecting some faded splendour, but instead we get newly and very tastefully refurbished splendour and for once Fraser can't moan that I've booked us into yet another budget-saving dive. The curry was good, too...

The following day we breakfast well and head out once again into freakishly

Cumbria. The terrain is much the same on the normally windswept tops, but there's no wind today, just a cloudless deep blue with a tinge of ozone around the outer edges. We're so high now and there is a perceptible curvature to the horizon, from where smoke rises and drifts. We assume it's some sort of eco peat burning, but later it dawns that it's wild fire on the moors. In February.

We arrive in Brough and then take the B6276 to Middle-in-Teesdale. The dense Lune Forest is to the left and the cluster of Selset, Balderhead and Glassholme Reservoirs to the right. And cutting through is one amazingly epic piece of road on which our 10th Anniversary MX-5 is spared nothing. There is no other traffic to stop play, just the unfurling and alignment of a perfect road on a perfect day and the perfect car for the job. In the zone, the Mk2 dances over the terrain. Every input is met with a response and a change of attitude. There is a constant

“ And we just keep on going as one epic, empty piece of road morphs into another and we're way past the Dales and getting dangerously close to Hadrian's Wall and Northumberland ”

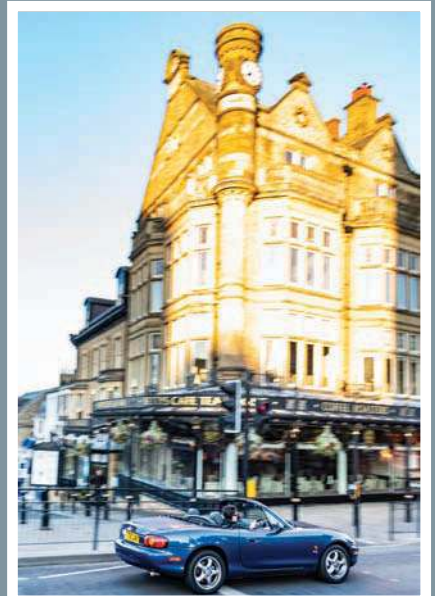
good weather, for what is the last day of February. Where are we off to? Well, back into the Dales, of course, but we're going to follow our noses and avoid the tourist hot spots, like Malham and Grassington. Taking the B6160 past Grassington, the imposing Kilnsey Crag is on our left and on our right Buckden Pike. Through Kettlewell and we hang a left and off the main road into Hubberholme and up over Langstrothdale Chase. It's narrow, but perfect for an MX-5. The road gains in elevation and once again we hit 25% inclines until we reach a summit and stop to take in the view. Stunning.

Fraser has been droning on about his drone and so out comes the little buzzy thing. He seems to think that he's capable of controlling the device and using it to take an aerial picture. I'm dubious, but credit where it is indeed due, he gets it airborne and the results, as you can see, are really quite good. We drop like the proverbial stone from a great height and end up back in Hawes, thrash back over the Buttertubs Pass and Tan Hill. Been there done that, and now we're at the fringes of the Dales and into uncharted territory. Indeed we're into

chatter of feedback through the steering, through every contact point. Nothing is lost in translation.

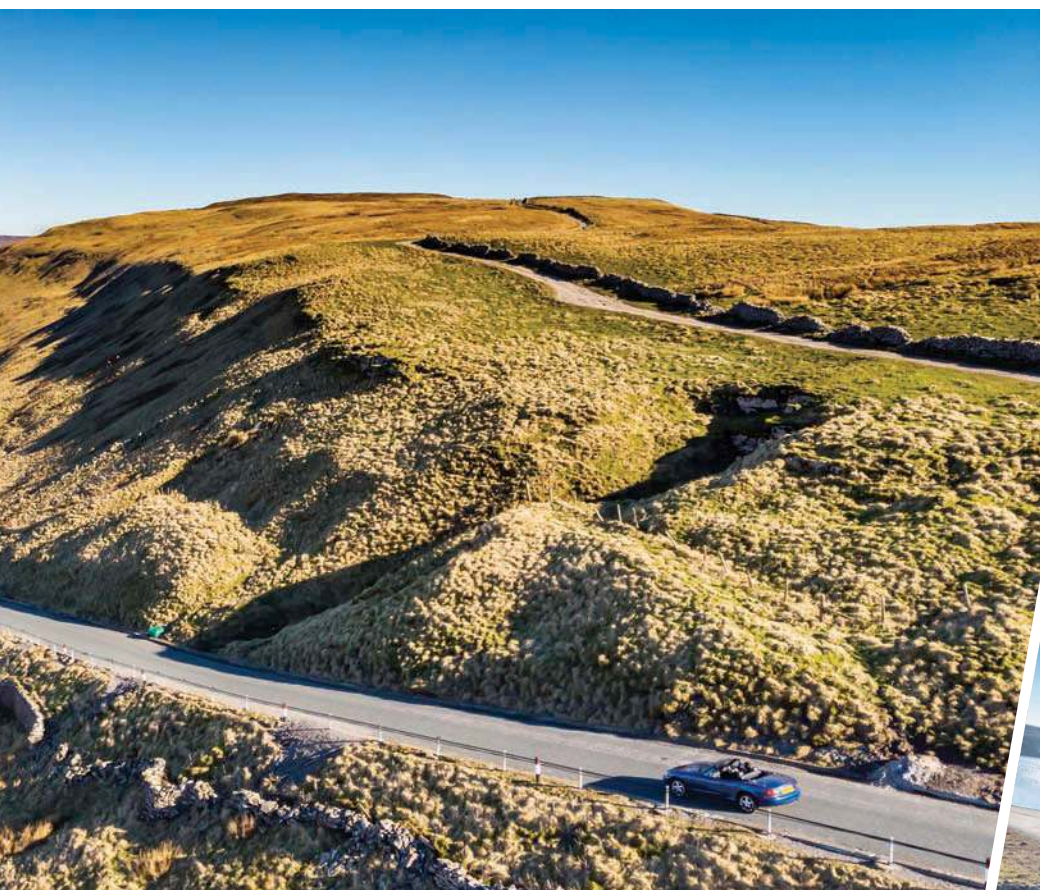
And we just keep on going as one epic, empty piece of road morphs into another and we're way past the Dales and getting dangerously close to Hadrian's Wall and Northumberland. Finally it's the concentration that starts to fail. The Mazda is still well up for it, but I'm frazzled, so we about turn and wind the pace back. We think about what other cars would be better for the day's driving, but aside from the odd Porsche, we can think of nothing to touch the Mazda on days like these. And the mk2 with its corrosive values? Well, I love 'em. The sweet spot between the teeny, tiny mk1 and the lardier mk3. Stop the Mk2 cull right now. Just keep patching 'em up, or do the job properly... But mine really was past it.

What a couple of days, and what better way to see the Yorkshire Dales and beyond than in an MX-5 of any description, model or vintage? Drive of my life? Well, it's right up there and that's saying something after many years in this writing and driving game. And yes, what a difference a year makes. 🏠



We stayed in Harrogate, Yorkshire's most regal spa town. Sadly we had to just make do with driving past Bettys famous Tea Rooms, but we can report that the Majestic Hotel is just that. Well worth a stay

[ROAD TRIP]



Left: Snapper Fraser got his buzzy drone out for this one. Very clever!

Bottom: Wild fires on the moors in February added to the slightly surreal feel of a winter road trip at 20 degrees in the north of England

Below: Reservoir Blues! No filters, no trickery: have you ever seen a sky so blue?



Dare to be different



When Rich Webb bought his mk3 he wanted to add some individual touches to make it his own. However, he never expected things to go this far...

Words: **Dan Sherwood** Photos: **Jonathan Salisbury**

THANKS

To my family for their patience; Jay for sorting out the paint job; Mike for many hours on the driveway helping; Jon for his excellent photos; Hamish, Joe, Ellie, Jack, Jason, Jordyn, Tom, Lewis, and Evie for your support along the way

I've always had a soft spot for Mazdas,' says Devon-based Rich Webb when we meet him and his shimmering black and gold mk3 MX-5 Sport with its air-bag suspension. 'My dream would be a mint FD RX-7 in rare Sunburst Yellow. I've worked on a few and they're such impressive machines.' However, being only 24, the insurance costs (not to mention the current purchase prices) of one of Mazda's rotary-engined rockets is too steep for Rich to stomach. It was even more bank balance-busting three years ago when he had only just turned 21, which was the catalyst to him seeking a more wallet-friendly alternative.

'At the time I was driving around in a BMW E38 728i,' remembers Rich. 'It was a big old barge and really comfortable, but what it gained in motorway mile-munching, it massively lacked in driver involvement, fizz and fun. Attributes that,

after previously owning a puny Renault Clio 1.2 as my first car, I was desperately seeking from my next daily driver.'

With his dream RX-7 out of the equation, Rich began looking into the Wankel-powered wonder's less potent, yet much more economically viable cousin, the MX-5. And as we can all attest, Rich's logic was flawless. Very few cars can hold a candle to the MX-5's magical mix of handling balance, sweet styling and visceral wind-in-your-hair motoring fun, at a very inclusive price.

'Originally I hadn't really considered any of the later variants, as I had my heart set on a first generation model,' Rich reveals. 'However, after looking at a few examples that were for sale within my budget, I soon realised that it was extremely difficult to find one in good condition without a ton of rust, and that anything worth buying came with a high price tag to match.'

But rather than put him off the idea of MX-5 ownership, this initial setback simply served to push more modern metal into Rich's crosshairs. 'If I couldn't get an older car, I decided to get the newest one I could afford, which led me to look at the third generation cars,' says Rich. 'I liked the fact that not many people had really done much to the mk3 models in the UK. They're really impressively tuned in Japan, but other than a few select examples here in the UK, they seem to have gone relatively unnoticed when it comes to modifying, which inspired me to do something a little bit different.'

Rich found a suitable base for his unique vision in the form of a standard mk3 Sport in gloss black. 'It was for sale up in Barnstaple, North Devon,' Rich recalls. 'It had all the good signs such as one lady owner, full service history, rust-free and it was freshly undersealed, too.'



[READER'S RIDE]

The test drive proved impressive and Rich purchased the car there and then. 'It was the first car I'd seen and the first mk3 I'd ever driven, but it was just so good I didn't want to wait and potentially lose it,' he laughs. 'I was so pleased with it and couldn't wait to get stuck in and start modifying it.'

First on Rich's list of upgrades was the brakes, which were refreshed with a set of Black Diamond dimpled and grooved discs with the brand's fast road pads within fully rebuilt and refurbished OEM calipers. 'I also added a set of braided brake lines to ensure a firm and consistent pedal feel when driving on the limit,' Rich says. 'Which is an area that was also radically enhanced by the extensive suspension mods.'

Going down...

The MX-5 is a car that's known for its precise steering and exploitable handling, but Rich felt there was room for improvement. He commissioned a set of custom extreme low-spec BC coilovers with uprated spring rates. These dropped the MX-5's curvaceous bodywork around 100mm closer to terra-firma and, along with uprated polyurethane bushes in the trailing arms, hubs and anti-roll bars, plus a custom four-wheel geometry alignment, all but eliminated the roll and wallow associated with the factory setup. 'The car handled like a go-kart,' grins Rich. 'Especially when I fitted the wider wheels and tyres. There was just so much grip to play with!'

And it's Rich's choice of rolling stock that is one of the most extreme elements of the car to date. Featuring 9.5x17in Work Emotion D9R wheels painted in Fiat bronze and wrapped in 245/40 R17 Uniroyal Rainsport 3 tyres, they required some serious wheelarch fettling to get them to fit. 'The wheels were an important element of the look,' explains Rich. 'So many mk3 owners run skinny 7J wheels and cover the car in chrome stick-on trim, but I wanted to take things in a completely different direction.'

To accommodate such wide rims, Rich had to roll the MX-5's arches. Unfortunately this uncovered an issue Rich previously thought he'd managed to avoid. 'When rolling the arches I found an area of rust behind the rear of the sill and up into the wheelarch,' he groans. 'I knew it was a common issue on earlier cars, but it's obviously a problem area on mk3s, too. It had been covered over with underseal, so I didn't notice it when I initially inspected the car.'

Luckily, it wasn't anything that couldn't



Parked up, the Carbon Miata front lip is on the deck



Controls for the air suspension are on the centre console

be remedied with some skilled metal work and a welder, and with the help of his friend, Jay Murray from JRMotorworx, Rich soon had the Five fighting fit once more. 'The arch rolling and the rust removal had left some battle scars on the car's bodywork,' says Rich. 'But rather than simply patch these up, I decided to save up for a full respray to bring the whole car back to tip top condition.'

Even though he was saving his pennies for the exterior refresh, Rich just couldn't stop himself from tinkering. 'To aid the engine's breathing I sourced an AEM cold air intake and a BBR 4-1 exhaust manifold and built a custom stainless steel exhaust system,' says Rich. 'After an ECU remap, the power had risen to 180bhp, and along with a big increase in the volume of the exhaust, there was a noticeable improvement in performance.'

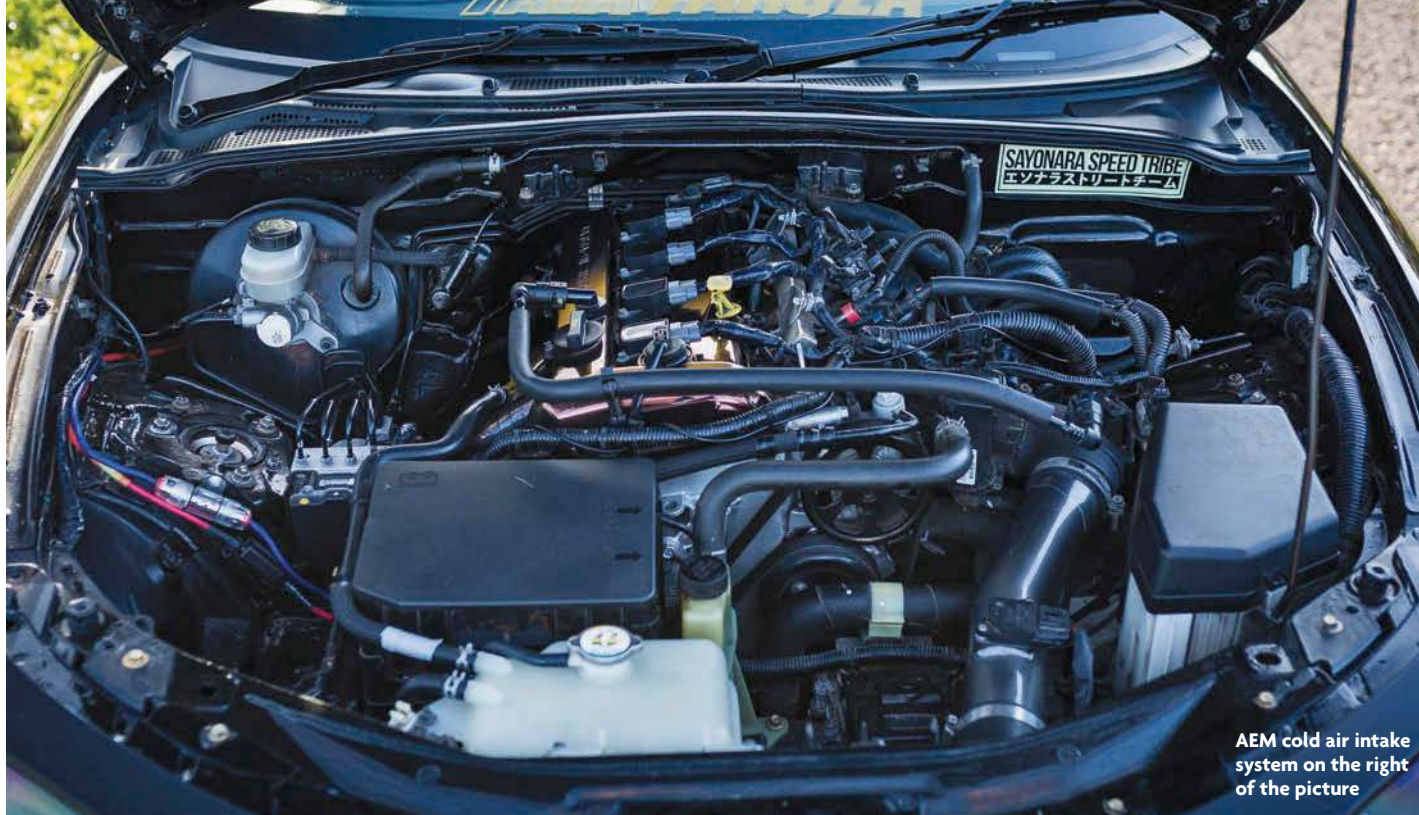
While he was working on the engine, Rich also prepped the block and painted it in a fresh coat of silver, while the rocker cover received a cool copper hue, mods that have really lifted the under-bonnet aesthetics.

'To ensure the extra grunt wasn't

wasted and to improve the engine's response, I fitted a lightweight flywheel and an uprated clutch from US transmission specialist Competition Clutch,' continues Rich. 'Supplied by Yorkshire-based rotary specialist Rotary Revs, it allows the engine to build revs quicker while retaining a near-standard feel to the clutch pedal for daily driving duties, so is a great upgrade for mk3s.'

With enough cash stuffed under his mattress to finally sort the bodywork, Rich decided to go the whole hog and add a host of aero upgrades, too. Up front a Carbon Miata front lip is mated to a smoothed front bumper, the headlights have been split and the innards painted black, and the orange side repeaters have been replaced with smoked items. At the rear a Carbon Miata duck-tail spoiler has been mated to the boot lid while the rear bumper has been cut and shaped around the custom exhaust tips.

'With the new exterior mods fitted, the car finally went off for paint. But rather than go for a simple blow-over in the factory black pigment, I took inspiration from the rocker cover and wheels and decided to add a bronze/gold pearl to



AEM cold air intake system on the right of the picture



Right: Work Emotion DR9R alloys in Fiat bronze paintwork

Left: BBR 4-1 manifold helps towards 180bhp power output

the clear coat,' says Rich. 'It's subtle enough to keep it classy, but adds a cool shimmer when the sun hits it.'

As anyone who has had their car resprayed can testify, the fear factor of damaging the pristine paintwork weighs heavy on your mind, and for Rich, with his slammed stance placing the new splitter just a few centimetres off the Tarmac, his desire for paint preservation was spoiling his enjoyment of the car.

Stepping out for some air

'It was just so low I worried I'd accidentally smash off the front splitter or would get beached on a speed bump,' Rich laughs. 'But at the same time I didn't want to merely raise the coilovers as it would ruin the look and stance, so I had to think of another option.' After some head scratching, the answer that presented itself was an unusual one, but one that added practicality and performance while still keeping the low-riding look Rich had grown to love...

'I'd previously used a company called Only Charged Dubs in Doncaster to install an air ride setup in my old BMW,' says Rich. 'They're air ride specialists

and can build systems to custom specs, so I gave them a call to see what they could do for the MX-5.'

Keen to retain the handling characteristics he had grown to love with the BC coilovers, Only Charged Dubs suggested retaining the damper bodies of the coilovers and replacing the springs with custom double-bellow air bags at the front and sleeve bags at the rear of the car.

'It's a 500-mile round-trip from my home in Devon up to Doncaster, but the journey was definitely worth it,' Rich beams. 'The air ride setup is brilliant. It's so compact with a small air tank and compressor in the boot and it makes the car so much more practical, as I can raise it when the road gets rough yet still have that cool drop when parked up or exhibiting at shows.'

But what about the handling? 'To be honest, the ride feels exactly the same as when it was running coilovers,' reckons Rich. 'And considering that I spent the weekend after the installation blasting around the demanding country roads that litter the Peak District with my mates, I can vouch for the strength of its

cornering abilities, too.'

This custom setup involved extensive modifications to the spring seat to allow the bags to sit over the damper body before the tweaked top mounts could be refitted for installation. It also features a trick digital controller mounted in the transmission tunnel next to the handbrake, with twin gauges neatly installed in the driver side air vents to monitor the system's air pressure levels.

'The air ride setup is pretty controversial in MX-5 circles,' admits Rich, 'as most people see it as detrimental to the car's performance. But for me it has only enhanced my enjoyment of the car. It's like having two cars in one, which opens up a whole host of possibilities. I love it!'

And with countless shows already planned into his diary, a conversion to individual throttle bodies, plus a potential road trip around Europe on the cards, it shows that, far from reaching the end, Rich's ownership journey looks set to continue for many years to come. And with such an open-minded approach to modifying, who knows where that may lead him? 📺

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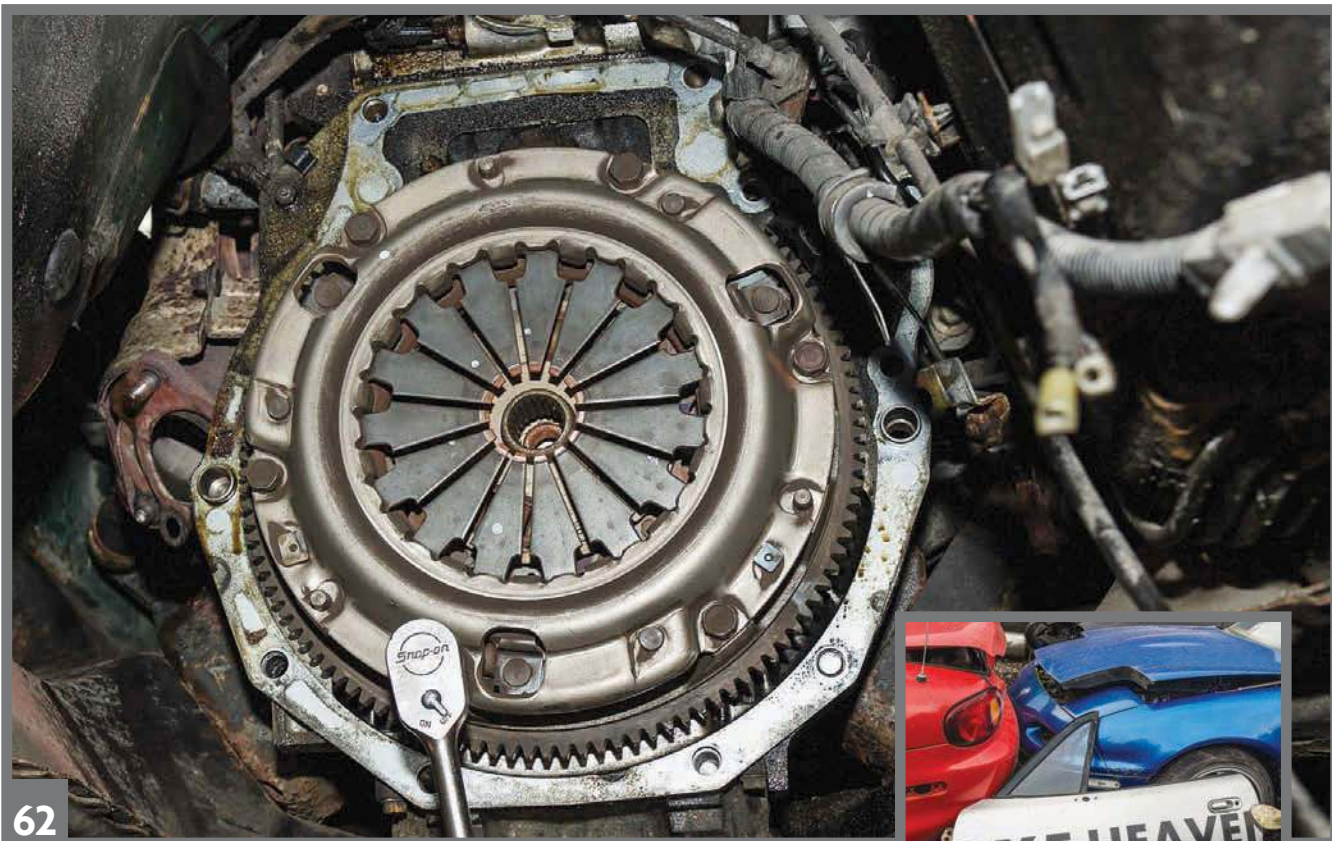
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PRACTICAL MX-5

ISSUE 11 SPRING 2019



62

HOW TO

Replace a mk1/2 clutch

62 Not the easiest job for the home mechanic, granted, but it can be done if you follow our guide, have a lot of patience, and a comprehensive tool kit. And a lift helps!

SPECIALISTS

MX5 Heaven

66 Home to a massive stock of well curated and high quality secondhand MX-5 parts, Dorset-based MX5 Heaven also sells a fine collection of new parts as well as servicing and repairing the world's favourite sports car. Restorations are also part of the repertoire of this bunch of MX-5 enthusiasts.

OUR CARS

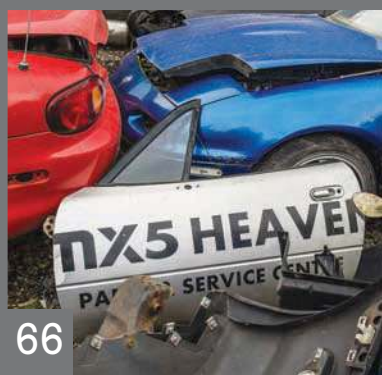
Our Rocketeer lives!

70 It's taken a while but Worland's mk1 Rocketeer is finished and out on the road. Fraser's got a new clutch in his mk1, but not without a fight, and Fox has bought a new (used) diff but hasn't yet found the time or money to fit it.

Q&A

With Michael Cleverley

76 The position of drain holes and the importance of keeping them clear; mk 3 gear selection woes and how to sort them; the cure for mk1 misfire misery; and how to check your mk3's EGR vacuum solenoid is functioning.



66



70



76



HOW TO REPLACE A MK1/2 CLUTCH

Replacing the clutch on your mk1 or mk2 MX-5 is probably at the very limit of what you'd consider doing for yourself at home, but it can be done. The caveat to that is that you really need to borrow or buy some time on a lift in order to comfortably extract the gearbox and give yourself space to attend to other problems that might arise: seized studs on the exhaust manifold and bellhousing, for example. We've picked an Exedy clutch from MX5Parts' list as it was original fitment.

PREPARATION

BEFORE YOU START

As we've already suggested, you need access to a hydraulic lift for this job, and we also recommend having a mate on hand to help lift out the gearbox and later replace it: it is possible to do on your own, but why struggle? And give yourself time. Lots of time. The mk1 and mk2 are old cars and nuts and bolts and studs could well be seized in place, especially if your car has never had its clutch replaced before. If you have a chance, douse everything in WD-40 a couple of hours in advance to help things along.

YOU WILL NEED

Although we've pictured a set of tools here, you're probably going to need everything in your toolbox, as well as some from a mate's. Socket set extension bars are an essential, as are a selection of articulated head sockets. From MX5Parts we sourced an Exedy

clutch disc kit, a flywheel spigot bearing, and a clutch release bearing. Because of seized studs, we ran out of time to fit the clutch slave cylinder pictured below.

PARTS SUPPLIER

MX5Parts
www.MX5parts.co.uk

Cleverley Repaired Cars
www.mx5expert.com



1 First disconnect the battery. Unscrew the gearknob. Remove the ashtray and open the rear storage tray to expose retaining screws for the centre console unit – undo those and another pair on the sides near the front of the console. Get ready to remove the console.



2 Disconnect the wires to the electric window switches, if your car has them – yours probably does, this mk1 didn't. Remove the sound deadening material around the gearlever and stash it somewhere that it doesn't get mistaken for rubbish!



3 Remove the four bolts from the gearshift gaiter and lift clear, first lubricating the rubber seal where it meets the lever. This one is perished and should be replaced to reduce noise and fumes.



4 Undo the three bolts around the gearlever and remove it – it's worth putting a piece of kitchen roll or similar underneath it to prevent oil dripping on your upholstery.



5 At the bulkhead, disconnect the lambda probe wire and push downwards. Uncouple the air intake pipe from the manifold to prevent strain as the engine moves when the gearbox is removed.



6 Remove the plastic gearbox shield: many early MX-5s no longer have them, the originals damaged or discarded. Remove the cross brace bar beneath the shield.



7 Looking towards the nose, on the left side of the gearbox casing loosen the oil filler nut to allow air ingress, thus making it easier to drain the gearbox oil into a suitable container.



8 Towards the front of the PPF (Power Plant Frame), undo and tuck to one side the speedometer cable.



9 Undo the joint between the tailpipe section of the exhaust system and the catalyst. This may require more than gentle persuasion, even after a bath in WD-40...



10 The main wires between the battery and engine are encased in this trunking, which is clipped in place along the length of the PPF. With long-nose pliers, carefully remove all the clips. Tuck trunking to one side.



11 Remove the earth wire from the aft end of the PPF and undo its bolts. The rear pair will need tapping upwards to drive the special nuts out of the top of the PPF and diff to enable their removal.



12 Take the PPF out, then in white paint pen mark the position of the rear of the propshaft where it meets the drive flange on the differential. Carefully remove the propshaft.



13 Undo electrical connectors on top of the gearbox. Undo the bolts attaching the exhaust downpipe to the manifold and remove. Undo the bolts around the bellhousing and the clutch slave cylinder.



14 Undo the bolts for the starter motor bracket but leave the starter motor in place. With a support in place, carefully wriggle the gearbox free – this is where a second pair of hands is useful.



15 Remove the six bolts holding the clutch cover in place and pull the cover off. Having first marked its position with white paint pen, undo the flywheel's retaining nuts and remove.



16 Using a hammer, knock out the flywheel's old spigot bearing from the centre. Spruce up with brake and clutch dust cleaner, then press in the new spigot bearing flush with the surface of the flywheel.



17 Reinstall the flywheel and Loctite the bolts. With the help of a clutch alignment tool, reassemble the clutch pressure plate and back plate, ensuring the right side of the clutch mates with the flywheel.



18 Clean up the clutch release fork and grease the input shaft (with lithium-moly grease) and splines (sparingly with spline hub grease). Slide the new clutch release bearing onto the splines.



19 Offer up the gearbox, making sure no wires get trapped between gearbox and engine. It may take some wiggling, but eventually there should be a satisfying clunk as everything engages in place.



20 Bolt the gearbox and PPF back in place, but before reversing the rest of the disassembly process, refill the gearbox with two litres of good quality oil.

SPECIALISTS



MX5 Heaven's mk3 courtesy car sits on top of one of the garage's hydraulic lifts, this particular one home to the suspension alignment equipment

MX5 HEAVEN (CHARMINSTER GARAGE)

A garage set up to maintain a large fleet of tree surgery vehicles has evolved into a burgeoning business catering to the MX-5 community, from servicing to top quality secondhand parts **Brett Fraser**

In some ways it's a sad sight, a graveyard for MX-5s. But those of us with mk1s and mk2s are painfully aware of the fact that sometimes when the rust is bad enough or the accident large enough, 'beyond economic repair' becomes the epitaph with which we need to bid our cars a tearful goodbye. But for the ex-owners of the MX-5s languishing in the cemetery outside Charminster-based MX5 Heaven, there's solace in the fact that their cars have died so that others might live.

Not that MX5 Heaven is purely an MX-5 breaker's, despite the morbidly fascinating presence of partly



The pearly gates?

dismantled Mazdas in the yard. Under the name of Charminster Garage, the business also operates as a regular local garage, servicing, maintaining, repairing and MOT-ing all manner of cars and light commercial vehicles, in addition to caring for, maintaining and restoring MX-5s under the MX5

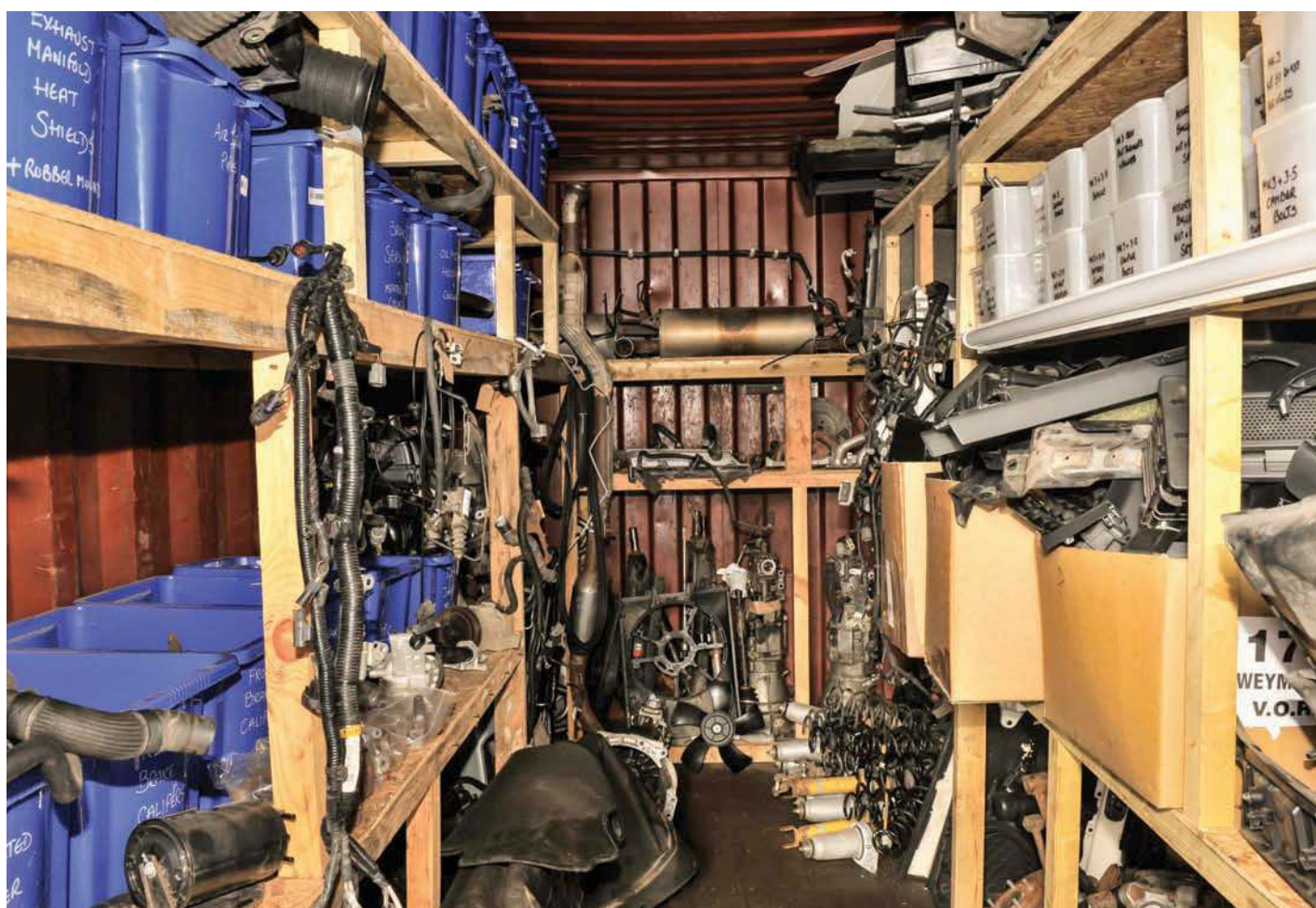
Heaven banner.

The tale of Charminster Garage is an interesting one as it evolved from a tree surgery business, as co-owner Nickie Crook explains. 'Basically we had so many vehicles that at least one of them was always in a garage. My business partner Anthony Willmington and I decided that it would be worth opening our own service centre, from which we could also make money by servicing other people's vehicles, too. So we set up a garage from scratch on the site we're on today, but with smaller premises.'

At that stage the notion of specialising in MX-5s hadn't

really entered the minds of anyone from Charminster, but as chance would have it, the idea had occurred to the chap in the next door unit. 'I think he started up MX5 Heaven in about 2005,' recalls Nickie, 'but it wasn't really much more than a rudimentary website offering a few parts for sale. The guy was always popping round to our workshop asking technical questions about how to fix things and take them apart, so when in 2007 he decided to pack it in, we decided to buy the business.'

'To be honest with you, for several years we just let MX5 Heaven tick over. We started



Work in progress: this container is dedicated to secondhand mk3 parts, which is a growing part of MX5 Heaven's business



MX5 Heaven's co-owner, Nickie Crook



Tony Shurey, a man passionate about secondhand parts

off with just a handful of used parts and a bog standard website. We also paid way too much for the first car we broke for spares – about two grand, which was beyond generous back then! We quickly learnt that lesson. Although we weren't actively pushing MX5 Heaven, word of mouth spread the name and it wasn't too long before people started to ring up

asking if we did new parts as well. So it made sense to do just that, and we made the decision to only stock quality parts – there's plenty of cheap stuff out there and a lot of it is not very nice.'

On the day of our visit MX5 Heaven had just taken delivery of a large stock of brake discs, and the shelves of the store were also groaning under the

weight of numerous other service and general maintenance components, including things like HT leads, air filters, refurbished brake calipers, timing belt kits and suspension parts, as well as oils, fluids and even cleaning products. 'We're adding new lines all the time,' Nickie tells us, 'and my biggest project at the moment is getting

everything listed on the website. As yet there's plenty that I haven't had time to put on, so if a customer has anything specific that they're after, it's best to give us a call, because we probably do have it.'

While MX5 Heaven's parts, both new and used, are available via mail order, many customers opt to visit the workshop, just outside

[SPECIALISTS]



MX5 Heaven's power steering pump shelf, each one labelled with the model of MX-5 it was reclaimed from. It's the same throughout the store rooms



Lights galore on the shelves



A fresh delivery of new parts



The company does many refurbished parts

Dorchester. 'As well as servicing and repairs, we fit a lot of hoods, sourced from Robin Hood in the US,' reveals Nickie. 'They're not the cheapest, but the quality is first-rate.'

Nick Cook, who runs the front desk at MX5 Heaven, chips in with a couple of examples of the distance some customers are prepared to travel to pay them a visit. 'Recently we had someone journey down from Manchester to have an exhaust fitted, while another made the trip from Birmingham for a window regulator. And because we have such a comprehensive range of used parts, a group

from the Israeli MX-5 Owners' Club has dropped in to see us. There's never a dull day here; we're getting constant phone calls from all around the world including Australia and New Zealand, Japan and the US, and Europe from Greece to Norway.'

'We do restorations, too,' continues Nickie. 'There's a green mk1 parked outside that we've almost finished for a customer. When he brought it in it was a colander: it was cheaper and easier to swap the rest of the car into a new shell. And obviously because we're breaking cars all the time, any bits requiring replacement have

been available on site. There's another mk1 you might have noticed outside sitting on four space-savers – that's a turbo conversion that MX5 Heaven undertook many years ago that we've re-acquired and will be restoring to its former glory.'

MX5 Heaven's used parts facility is the domain of Tony Shurey, a man passionate and knowledgeable about MX-5s, particularly mk1s. 'Sometimes it's heartbreaking having to scrap them,' he confesses. 'I always have my eye open for a car, a mk1, that might not be so bad after all that I could restore and use for myself! For me the

mk1 remains the best of the bunch, the purest, and a very different driving experience from, say, the mk3. The mk3 is a fine everyday practical machine without doubt, but I love the mk1 for the way it drives.

'When I started out here we might have had 30 to 50 mk1s in the yard ready to be broken, but these days the mk2 is by far the most prolific. The mk3 is arriving here in increasing numbers now, so I'm having to make more room in my mk3 parts storage area. We have people from all over ringing us up offering us cars, and where possible I like to drive each one



Enough to bring a tear to your eye... However, every salvageable part in each of these mk2s will be reclaimed to help other cars live a little longer

around the yard, just to ensure that the mechanical parts operate the way they should – it's a quality check, because we don't want to be selling parts that don't work.'

As values of old MX-5s continue to rise and owners are more interested in keeping them running and in good condition than they once did, Tony has noticed a shift in what people are after. 'A lot of folk now want originality,' he tells us, 'and whereas I used to chuck nuts and bolts and screws into the metal recycling bin, I'm now saving and bagging them up for sale. It's handy for customers because some parts are now very hard and sometimes impossible to get hold of.'

'It's a similar story with the bodysells. Not so long ago, once I'd removed every serviceable component from a car then the body would automatically be scrapped. Now I'm looking very hard at each shell to determine what panels might have a second life.'

Recently the owner of an accident-damaged mk2 asked about sections of inner and outer rear wing and chassis. I was able to cut a solid section off a car we had here – he was overjoyed because the alternative was to have parts fabricated.'

In addition to being happy in his work, Tony is meticulous. The tools on his workbench are neatly arranged, there's no mess despite a large chunk of his job being tearing cars to pieces, and when you peek inside the stores, well, even Monica from *Friends* would be overwhelmed by the tidiness and careful labelling. Small parts are kept in plastic tubs or clear bags with a detailed description of what they are and what model and type of MX-5 they fit; larger components have either a swing-tag or are identified by white marker pen on their outer surface. And everything is clean, even the shelves themselves, which in a breaker's yard is quite an achievement.

Another service being provided within Tony's realm is the sandblasting, refurbishment and repainting of alloy wheels and wiper arms, and they are very nicely done. We also spotted a pair of very tidy 'Icon' limited edition badges bagged up on a bench, further evidence that MX5 Heaven lets nothing of value – especially rare items – go to waste.

Again Nickie admits that she hasn't yet caught up with the

sheer volume of used parts to be listed on the company website. 'It's one of my priorities but it takes a bit of time,' she laughs. 'We have pretty much everything an MX-5 owner [mk1, 2 and 3] could want in stock: if you can't find something online, please give us a call.'

As we wave the MX5 Heaven crew goodbye, we know we'll be back. Only next time it will be with a van...



MX5 Heaven-developed turbo mk1 awaiting restoration

OUR CARS



From the rear there's nothing to suggest that Simon's mk1 has more cylinders than standard and in a different configuration. Which is cool...

TOTAL MX-5: THE CARS WE OWN

You're passionate about MX-5s and so are we: that's why we started a magazine to celebrate the car. So meet some of the cars on the *Total MX-5* fleet. Photographs: **Antony Fraser**



MK1 'ROCKETEER'

Run by: Simon Worland
Owned since: 2011
Converted: February 2018
Total mileage: 63,879
Latest costs: £771

ROCKETEER UPDATE

You might recall that we covered the build of my V6 Rocketeer last year in *Total MX-5*. Amazingly, almost a year has now passed since it returned to the road. Even though it was the very first customer build, with all the



potential problems that this could entail (the first turn-key car was being built elsewhere in parallel), my ownership has, for 99 per cent of the time, been an experience to induce many broad smiles.

The sonic surprise of the hissing, burbling V6 on start-up, and the sophisticated blare when giving it the beans, are still highly addictive. One thing was clear early on, though. To misquote the line in *Jaws* (about

insufficient boat size), my first drive in the wet confirmed that 'we're going to need bigger tyres'. It was a shame in a way, because I wanted the Mazda to look as understated as possible.

Still, I managed to keep things in the family by swapping the standard 14-inchers for some five-spoke 15in wheels from a mk2. Some 195/50 Dunlop Blue Responses restored grip to an acceptable level, just in time for one of the hottest summers in many years. Would this be a challenge for the cooling system? Well, apart from a minor issue early on with the ECU's drivers not being quite up to the job of running the electric water pump (cured by including a relay into the

circuit), cooling has never been a problem.

This was proved in an hour-long queue on a hot summer's day, when I took my son to an air show. The tickover did become a bit erratic, though, and Rocketeer's Bruce Southey and I eventually traced this to heat-soak affecting the air temp sensor. Moving it from one of the plenums to one of the air filters has cured it.

I also felt that the ECU might be getting a bit warm at times, although it didn't complain, so I spent a happy evening with a soldering iron extending every single wire in the wiring loom so that I could move the ECU into the cabin where it now sits comfortably in the space vacated by the original. At this point I must say that Bruce has been incredibly supportive of my meddling with his kit and, being very receptive to feedback, he has incorporated these and other suggestions into the latest kits along with some enhancements of his own – which I shall come to later.

With 1000 miles completed

and the new engine nicely run-in, it was time for a rolling-road session to cure a few little fuelling hiccups and a misfire at certain revs under light loading. This turned out to be more of a challenge than expected, as the ECU was found to be doing its job perfectly well. The problem lay elsewhere.

Having had a spark plug failure when the engine was started for the first time, my attention went in that direction. The Jaguar AJ30 engine uses platinum plugs with comparatively large plug gaps. Experimenting with another set and reducing the gaps made things worse. A check of the wiring loom found nothing amiss, so the only thing left to do was to check the coil packs, a known weak area on the S-type Jaguar that is the usual home for this engine. A check of the primary and secondary circuits showed that three of the six brand-new coil packs were faulty. So be warned: aftermarket parts may look the same as original equipment ones, but they may not be as

good. A quick call to Berkshire Jaguar Spares had six new genuine coil packs on the way and, once they were fitted, there was no more hesitation.

The run on the rolling road showed up something else. My decision to keep the exhaust centre-box and a single tailpipe system (from Racing Beat) may have kept things quiet, but it came at a cost. Other MXV6s were by now up and running and routinely showed 260bhp or more on the dyno. Mine was just shy of 240 and, while some of that might be attributable to the engine's newness, most is down to the exhaust. Bruce has plans for a switchable by-pass valve so you can have the best of both worlds. Meanwhile, though, I can't help thinking that 240bhp and all that torque is actually more than adequate.

So, what next? The gearing is too short; 4000rpm at 80mph is a bit busy for a lightly-loaded 3.0-litre V6 and it doesn't help fuel economy. So I have found a low-mileage, 3.6:1 limited-slip differential from a mk2 Sport and will be fitting it soon. This

should reduce the revs to around 3500rpm at 80mph, and add to the car's more 'grown-up' feel. At the same time, I will change the flywheel for the revised aluminium one that Bruce has sent me. The first batch of flywheels were manufactured with an incorrect dimension and, while they work and you would never know there was anything awry, Bruce is a perfectionist.

Other changes that Bruce has introduced for the 2019 kits are newly-manufactured throttle bodies because original Mazda ones are getting old and tired, and bigger-diameter exhaust manifolds to help gas-flow and release more power. A bigger electric water pump has been introduced, aimed at those who want to go racing, and the wiring loom is being altered to include what is needed to make use of the Jaguar V6 engine's variable valve timing, currently disabled on my car.

With more than 60 kits now sold, Bruce seems to be on to a winner with the Rocketeer. It's great to be involved with it.



The Jaguar 3.0-litre V6 looks quite at home in here. Rocketeer has developed several upgrades that should be fitted by the time of Simon's next report

[OUR CARS]



MK1 1.8

Run by: Brett Fraser
Owned since: 2016
Total mileage: 126,286
Latest costs: £535

WON'T LET GO

And the prize for understatement of the year so far goes to... Vince Bickers of Cleverley Repaired Cars. After nearly two hours of twisting, hammering, lubricating, heating, cutting and welding in an effort to extract a recalcitrant stud on the lower end of the exhaust manifold, when it did finally fall with a thud onto the workshop floor, Vince calmly pronounced, 'Well that was more of an arse than I was expecting.'

Up until that point, the epic struggle of man versus corrosion was seriously taking its toll on Vince's patience and sanity. The thing is, my car was actually in for a replacement clutch – a standard Exedy item from MX5Parts, which is what it was fitted with at the factory – and Vince was hoping to fly through the job while I tried not to get in his way taking pictures for the How To feature on page 62. But because my mk1's a year-round daily driver, salt and electrolysis have had many years to effect and perfect metal-to-metal fusion, and it was, shall we say, challenging to overcome this bond in several areas of the underside of my pride and joy.

The first stumbling block of this nature was the joint between the rear cat and the back section of the exhaust. Vince had already had to cut off the somewhat frilly heat-shield around the cat, and then when heat and WD-40 failed to get the nuts and studs to yield, he got seriously busy with the disc cutter. After he'd removed the gearbox he ran into more difficulties. A stud sheared as he was undoing the nuts on the bellhousing. And then another

one did the same. Cue more heat and penetrating oil, then welding nuts onto the stubs of the studs to get more purchase on them, and much application of an air chisel to try to shake them free and turn the nuts.

'On most jobs you expect to find one seized nut, but it's normally not too hard to sort it out; this car's getting ridiculous,' sighed an exasperated Vince. And that was before the manifold 'difficulty'. So a big round of applause is due Mr Bickers for not exploding or running away or bursting into tears of frustration. As you can see from the pictures in the How To story, thanks to Vince's dogged determination he got the job done and my car has a new clutch.

To be honest, I had the clutch replaced not because it was slipping but because we wanted to run a How To piece on the replacement process: with 130,000 miles on the clock and a reasonable certainty that it was on its original clutch, we figured it must be getting near the point where a new one would be needed, so decided to



MX5Parts had several alternatives, but the Exedy was original fitment



Nut welded onto the stud's stump on the bottom of the manifold downpipe

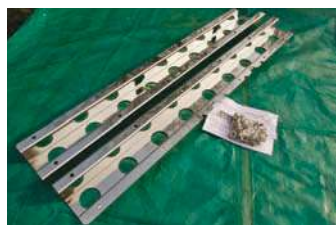


At Brands Hatch to interview Matt Pollard: read about him on page 28

pre-empt that day. When he looked at the old one Vince reckoned it might have had another 10–15,000 miles left in it, if driven carefully. That seemed close enough for it not to have been a waste of time replacing it, though I'm not entirely sure Vince would wholeheartedly agree...

Even though previously I'd had no issues with the gearshift of my car, the new clutch has made a big improvement. For starters, the pedal is appreciably lighter, and the lever now moves across the gate with greater speed and less effort – over the preceding miles I'd clearly grown used to the fact that the lever seemed to catch a little bit as it engaged a gear, but that's now all gone. The clutch is still bedding in at the minute, so things can only get better.

Just before Christmas I was wearing a huge grin. Not in anticipation of the arrival of a portly, jolly gentleman in red attire, but because a courier had turned up on the doorstep clutching a sack of goodies from Jass Performance. Long, shiny stainless steel reinforcement rails for the chassis, rubber spring spacers and damper strut top mounts to help sort out my



Jass Performance shiny chassis rails...



...and suspension aids, Fraser hopes



Another Jass item – understated black mesh grille for the mk1's 'mouth'

car's dismal ride quality, and a black mesh front grille simply because it looks nice.

Annoyingly, in the intervening period I haven't been able to get around to actually fitting anything to the car. Except for the grille. I'd like to say that was easily done, but the two bolts behind the front bumper that you have to undo and then use to affix the grille, had obviously been taking lessons from their relatives in the bellhousing and the manifold. Perhaps they should have paid more attention in class, though, as a half-hour soak in WD-40

weakened their resolve. I'm liking the look of the grille now it's fitted – subtle and functional.

When the time comes to fit the rest of the Jass gear I'll be taking the car in to Cleverley's: I'm sure that installing the chassis protection rails is something a competent home mechanic could do using axle stands on their driveway, but I don't have any axle stands and make no claims to competency. And if anything underneath the car proves obstinate, I know I can count on Vince's bloody mindedness to save the day.



MK1 1.8

Run by: Simon Fox
Owned since: January 2017
Total mileage: 128,343
Latest costs: £350 (diff)

THE WAITING GAME

I was hoping to be able to report on my new (secondhand from eBay, £350) Torsen diff and uprated clutch in my mk1, but the non-arrival of the clutch put paid to the work happening before this magazine's deadline.

You may remember in the last issue of *Total MX-5* I reported on oil seeping from the gearbox. With my savings

still not equal to the cost of the turbo conversion and the discovery that the clutch is included in that, I asked Skuzzle if they'd knock the cost off the turbo job if I had the clutch done in advance. They will, so man maths dictates if everything's apart to replace oil seals, I may as well sort out the stronger clutch and fit an LSD and pay for that turbo conversion in as many chunks as I can!

For now the diff (all 33kg of it, according to the internet; ouch!) is sitting in a corner of the office floor looking neglected [and resembling a wrapped up cow's head – ed]. Maybe in the next issue I'll have a slightly happier report to make, and I'm still planning on a trip to South Wales to have a new hood fitted...



It's definitely a cow's head – art ed

[OUR CARS]



MX3 2.0

Run by: Steve Bennett
Owned since: December 2017
Total mileage: 145,850
Latest costs: £280

COOL RUNNING

I'm pretty much a year and 10,000 miles into bargain mk3 ownership now, having taken the mileage of my leggy MX-5 from 135,000, to nearly 146,000 miles. Needless to say, it's been both fun and reasonably painless and a great way to get around on a day-to-day basis.

Costs? Well first up there was new owner splurge on some non-essential, but desirable stuff, like the Eibach springs and anti-roll bars, plus a wheel refurb in anthracite, which I think offsets the Copper Red metallic rather well. And, of course, lowering a mk3 always works from an aesthetic, as well as dynamic point of view. Essential, though, was a new set of boots all-round and I'm pleased to say the budget Davantis are performing well.

A looming expense was the clutch. It was heavy from the moment I bought the car and there was no record of it ever being changed in the comprehensive service history and thick wad of receipts. The gearchange was very stiff, too. Were the two things related?



Early mk3s seem to be gaining notoriety for sticking thermostats. Bennett had his replaced

Only one way to find out... I'm used to the eye-watering expense of changing the clutch on various Porsches I've owned, so a bill of £320 from local specialist, Michael Cleverley, was a very pleasant surprise. Oh, and the gearchange was transformed, too. Result.

The MX then sailed through its MOT, although it was noted that the front pads were a bit thin, so I changed them for some Mintex stoppers and threw in some Mintex discs too.

That was that for a while, but

more recently I had noticed that the car was struggling to reach any sort of water temperature and that it had lost a bit of its zing. Sticking thermostats on early mk3s is becoming something of a thing as the years roll on and clearly that's what was happening with mine. And as well as it not reaching temperature, it wasn't producing much in the way of warming heater air either. Not much good when it's winter. And the lack of perceived 'zing'? Well, with water temp low, the ECU would be dumping more fuel into the engine, more than it could burn. No coincidence that I had noticed a spike in fuel consumption, too.

Only one thing for it, then. Time to bite the maintenance bullet and drop off with Mr Cleverley for a new thermostat, a job which he describes as 'fiddly', so glad I wasn't attempting it. The part is not

cheap at £80 from MX5Parts, but it is Mazda original kit.

Installed and with fresh coolant, the engine temperature now sits where it should, in the middle of the dial. The heater is pumping out winter-defying hot air and the performance is restored, most noticeably in throttle response. I'm not guzzling as much gas either, so my wallet is happier.

While it was on the ramp, I asked Michael to change the oil and filter. I usually do this myself and had both oil and filter ready and waiting, but frankly for want of a few quid, I was happy not to be grovelling around under the car on my drive, getting gravel in my hair. What oil? Well a 5W/30 obvs (or not, others will doubtless have their own opinion on viscosity, but that's what Mazda recommends) and I happened to have five litres of Shell Helix Ultra full synthetic kicking around. I know not from where or why, because I've never run a car that specifies this brew. Anyway, it saved me a few quid, it's good stuff and in it went. Oil use remains zero, so I'm happy.

And that's it really. The hardtop remains on, which means I've missed some top-down fun in this freakishly mild winter, but I've been glad of it on long journeys and when the weather has been not so good. But spring is around the corner, so when the clocks go forward at the end of March, I will celebrate by going topless once again and stashing the hardtop in the back of the garage.



Jet wash gets the crud off. Good for getting salt off the underside too

Bennett is looking forward to the end of March, when the hardtop will come off



TOTAL MX-5

BACK ISSUES & BINDERS

BACK ISSUES



MISSED AN ISSUE OF TOTAL MX-5? We have limited stocks of issues 3, 4, 9 and 10 available to order, although 1, 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8 are sold out they are available digitally from pocketmags.com. A list of contents for all back issues is available on totalmx-5.com, and the all-inclusive price per copy is £6.00 (UK), £7.50 (Eur) and £8.75 (RoW).

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A PAIN IN THE DRAIN HOLE

Michael Cleverley of Cleverley Repaired Cars, expert on all things MX-5, answers your questions

LET THE WATER FLOW

Often we see mk1s, 2s and 3s with fogged up windows or, worse still, wet carpets. In severe cases the ECU can become waterlogged as it's mounted low in the passenger footwell.

The common cause of these issues is simply blocked water drains! Some of you know all about these, but we've noticed on the forums that many newcomers to the MX-5 have been asking what to look for and what to do.

The convertible roof is not sealed at the rear edge of the body; instead it is bolted into a moulded plastic gutter that's designed to channel the water that enters the body and forward it to a drain either side

of the car where it should run harmlessly to the ground. Unfortunately, if not well serviced, these drains become blocked with leaves etc. When this happens the forward edge

of the gutter overflows and water enters the car causing at best an unpleasant smell of soggy carpet.

Clearing the two drains is simple enough once you have

located them. You can either jack the car up and from underneath you can see the rubber pipe outlets just behind the rear inner sill. Some cars may still have a small flap in the outlet which in itself can cause a blockage. Most cars have had this flap removed with no apparent issues.

Using a flexible rod such as a clarinet cleaner (easily available from eBay) or even electrical flex, you simply insert it into the outlet, past the flap and work it up into the car and move it around. Soil will probably fall out and possibly lots of water if the drain is blocked, so best be prepared for a soaking!

Alternatively, from above, if you move the seat as far



Top: a very clean mk1/2 drain hole. Above left: why cleaning is important. Above right: mk3 drain hole located beneath this grille



Using a multimeter to test the ignition leads' electrical resistance

forward as you can, it is possible to see the top of the drain: it's behind the upper seat belt mounting tower below the lower pivot of the hood frame. A rod can be inserted here and pushed right through.

All models have the drains in approximately the same place.

A warning though: don't use anything too large or rigid to rod the drain as there is a risk that the lower drain tube may detach from the upper which can result in quite an effort to re-fit it!

We tend to carry this operation out at every service along with clearing the small sill drains. It's one of those simple tasks where a little effort can save a lot of trouble.

MISFIRE MISHAP

Q When driving my mk1 under high load the car can hesitate and stutter. It's not nice to drive like this. Have you any idea what may be wrong?

A There are a few things to consider with this fault. What you describe sounds like an ignition misfire. This is reasonably common. You need to suspect the condition of the spark plugs and ignition leads. I recommend replacing the plugs unless they're as new. We use NGK BKR6E 11. The 11 indicates that the plug is supplied with a 1.1mm plug gap which is suitable for your car.

Look at the leads closely for perishing of the insulation and make sure that the terminals are not corroded. If they look

OK you can use a multimeter to measure the leads' resistance. Set your multimeter to ohms and measure the leads' resistance one at a time (you will need a nail or similar to reach into the spark plug end with the probe). If one is significantly higher replace them all. You should see approx 15,000 ohms. If you're in doubt, replace them.

Before refitting the plug leads to the ignition coil, look inside the coil terminals. We have seen quite a few with a lot of corrosion in one or two of the terminals: remove this with a scraper or screwdriver before fitting the leads. Nine times out of ten your misfire will be cured – if not, then you may need a new ignition coil.

LOOSE CHANGE

Q My mk3 has quite a difficult gearchange. In particular, I often get reverse when going for first gear, which can be embarrassing! I have been told that the gearbox selectors may be worn, this being expensive to fix. Is that correct? PS: it's a six-speed.

A Don't panic, we've seen this a few times now. It's most likely the black plastic plate at the base of the gearstick that acts as a gate for the gear selection. If you are a little aggressive with your changes or you drive with your hand on the stick a lot, the plate wears and no longer locates the gearstick correctly. Luckily the part is available from Mazda and costs



Plastic gate on mk3 six-speed 'box can wear over time and lead to inaccurate shifts – compare the inner shapes of the new one on the left, and the eroded original on the right

less than £30.

Easy to fit, you just undo the knob and remove the centre console, remove the rubber gaiter and unbolt the black plate. Swap the new one onto your gearstick and re-assemble. It will feel like new. Incidentally this only happens on the six-speed cars.

TALKING IN CODE

Q My 2008 mk3 has got an engine management light on. My neighbour plugged in a meter thing and told me I had a problem code P0403. Am I doing any damage still using the car and what could be the worst case for having this sorted out?

A I think we have seen this before. P0403 indicates a fault with the EGR (exhaust gas recirculation) vacuum solenoid. It's a small electrical solenoid that is used to control the exhaust gas recirculation valve that is part of the emissions system. The replacement part is approx £96 and takes a few minutes to fit. You will find two of them mounted on the top of the black plastic inlet manifold. A simple test is to remove the solenoid's multiplug and provide a 12-volt feed and an earth: you should hear it click open. If nothing happens it's burnt out. There shouldn't be a problem continuing to drive the car short-term.



Exhaust gas recirculation vacuum solenoids occasionally fail

MX-5, MIATA, EUNOS – THREE NAMES, ONE BRILLIANT CAR

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MK3 SAMCO SPORT HIGH PERFORMANCE SILICONE HOSES

MX-5 at 30



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Winter sun-seeking out in the Yorkshire Dales



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IN THE CHANGING
The 30th anniversary of the MX-5 is celebrated with a limited run of bright orange models. The car is shown in a dynamic pose, highlighting its sleek design and vibrant color.

THIRTY YEARS ON
The MX-5 has become a global phenomenon, celebrated for its performance, handling, and timeless design. This special issue features a collection of photos and articles celebrating the car's 30th anniversary.

THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY
To mark the occasion, Mazda has released a limited edition of the MX-5 in a bright orange color. The car is shown in a dynamic pose, highlighting its sleek design and vibrant color.

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[MK1]



1995 MX-5 Mk1 1.8 Classic Red

Original 'time warp' car in excellent condition, 58,000 miles. Unmarked original interior with excellent bolsters. FSH from new, full MOT, all handbooks and 3 keys, dealer fit 14" Fondmetal alloys and Michelin tyres all round, upgraded brakes, discs and bushes. Tel: Keith, 07971 487443 (Sheffield, South Yorkshire).

£4850 ono T11/003



MX-5 Mk1 1990

Mechanically sound, new Spax adjustable sports suspension, Yellow Stuff brake pads all round, new EBC slotted and grooved discs, long MOT (Oct '19), hard top included if price £1200 met, £995 without. Toyo Proxes tyres on BBS alloys sprayed black (14"), toggle switches inside Jass performance details, carbon fibre wipers, original engine and gearbox, 1.6 manual 5 speed, future classic. Paintwork is bad point, typically most red cars of this age are, cosmetics are not enough to come with silly offer. It's a sound car. Tel: 07447 904999 (Dorset).

£1200 T11/014



Mk1 red Eunos 1990

Excellent example of a Mk1, no rust, no welding, low mileage approx 63,000 miles, automatic gearbox, hardtop, new tyres, must be viewed to be appreciated. Email: james.m.bentley@aol.co.uk (Manchester).

£3250 T11/002

Silver Mk1 1.8L MX-5 ongoing project

100K miles, had rear arch rust, now repaired in primer, front wing showing signs of blistering so removed, two good second hand steel wings (green) supplied with car, starts and runs, could be put back on the road easy, or track day car or spares, a second hood due to plastic window, patched hood fabric good, no photos, needs to be viewed. Tel: 07743 982682 (East Sussex).

£475 ono T11/016



MX-5 Eunos Mk1 1600 import

Comes complete with hard top, in excellent mechanical order, tyres all as new, new radiator, adjustable suspension, soft top has been replaced and is in excellent condition, no rust, reluctant sale. Tel: 07867 528347 (Glasgow).

£1500 T11/006



MX-5 M pack convertible

Great condition, mint, no dents/marks, very well looked after, starts/drives perfectly fine with no problem at all, very good engine. All previous MOTs and papers on all work that has been carried out, low mileage, HPI clear, no accidents, cheap insurance group 1.8, no time wasters, full service book with loads of paperwork, long MOT, tax, great engine. Tel: 07895 013095 (West Midlands).

£899 T11/010



Mk1 MX-5 Eunos import

Thinking of selling my low mileage Mk1, only owned it a couple of months but have decided it's not really for me. 1.6 1991 import with limited slip diff, being an import it has all the goodies, power steering, electric windows and air con, only done 55,000 miles, no rust underneath whatsoever. Sills are mint, one bubble on one of the rear arches and one little patch on both front wings where it's had a bad repair in the past, slight lacquer peel around the fuel cap, other than that it's 8/10 condition, full service 1K ago including fuel filter and spark plugs. Tel: 07946 810156 (Devon).

£1500 ono T11/012



1996 MX-5 Mk1 drift car

Spec: extended arms for lock, welded diff, hydro handbrake, boot cut out for weight reduction, roll cage, led light bar, bucket seat, spare skid wheels, lowered. Open to offers! Tel: 07701 027604 (Hampshire).

Offers T11/011

[MK2]



MX-5 MK2 Roadster 1.6 petrol in gold

1998, MOT September 2019, 161K miles, 5 speed manual, runs, drives and stop as should, engine, gearbox and clutch all as expected, no unwanted noises, knocks or bangs, age related marks, few paint bubbles as expected for a 21 year-old car but cleans up well as pictured. Recent oil and filter change, interior great condition, roof has no holes or rips like most, very good condition, soon to be a classic, cheap drift car or summer car for someone, viewings welcomed, logbook on way as was part exchange, can still tax it. Tel: 07548 160369 (Notts).

£695 T11/024



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Beautiful 2003 MX-5 1800 Sport

Only 59K miles, six speed gearbox, full service history, MOT to August 2019, cambelt changed at 45K. The car is fitted with heated leather sports seats in perfect condition, front and rear fog lights, engine brace, electric windows and mirrors, mohair hood with heated rear window, factory fitted wind break and key fob door and boot entry, wheels and tyres are in perfect condition, the car drives like a dream and looks a real stunner. Tel: 07502 023947 (Somerset).

£2850 ono

T11/008



MX-5 1.8 2001

MOT until October 2019, been sat for 3 months, tyres are good condition, has a K&N air intake system, 45mm lowering springs. Bodywork has a couple of marks on both doors and wings and a key mark down the one side, both sills have been patched up already but does not require any welding. New battery on last MOT, new discs and pads 6 months ago which have barely been driven on, roof is a bit tatty, would make a perfect track car or would need a bit of TLC to look the part again. Text: 07553 086828 (Cardiff).

£390

T11/009



1999 MX-5 1.8 Sports convertible

12 services, alloys, 2 keys, glass rear screen, lady owner, great fun to drive, 12 services (9 are Mazda dealer), great condition, electric windows and mirrors, glass heated rear screen, power steering, alloy wheels, CD player, June 2019 MOT, amazing value and renowned for being one of the best handling sports cars around. Tel: 07948 024335 (Beds).

£1390

T11/017



1999 MX-5 Mk2

The car has never let me down, very reliable, mechanically sound, solid underneath and overall in really good condition for a 20 year-old car. The sale of the car includes the hard top, 2 keys and all paperwork history eg service history, original manuals, receipts etc. I have also just had the car MOT'd and serviced, MOT until the end of February 2020, only 51,000 miles, 1.8L 16v DHOC, electric windows and mirrors, Sony Bluetooth and USB stereo, new front shock absorbers, 4 new tyres, new clutch master slave cylinder, new exhaust just over a year ago. Slight bubbling on a couple of arches but it is very minor, the soft top leaks and could be replaced, any questions feel free to call, text or send a message, open to sensible offers. Tel: 07522 154659 (Edinburgh).

£2000

T11/023



2003 MX-5 Ltd edition

Full MOT, 70,500 miles, just serviced, LSD 1.8VVTi engine, blue mohair roof, full heated leather interior, touch screen Pioneer telephone connect radio/stereo at a cost of £500, original leather wallet and handbooks, previous MOTs, maintained regardless of cost, lady owner, baby forces sale. Tel: 07809 592475 (Cheshire).

£2000

T11/007

MX-5 with 1.6L engine

Clean MX-5 with good tyres, deep tread left, has very good hood with heated glass rear window, solid underneath, had all MOT work done (to March 2020), service: oil/filter and plugs replaced. Tel: 07816 654906 (Hampshire).

£1290 ono

T11/027



1.6 MX-5

Crystal Blue and is in very good condition considering its age, the original interior is in very good order with minimal wear, very low mileage of 61,377, MOT until March 2020, full service history, last full service and weather sealed in October 2018, new cambelt in 2015. It drives and pulls very well and feels very tight, two keys supplied with the car, matching colour coded hard top and this comes complete with a storage bag, the car is a real looker, in Mazda's favoured colour. Tel: 07717 050025 (Suffolk).

£1700 or offers

T11/026

Issue No.12 of
Total MX-5 goes on
sale 27 June

[MK3]



MX-5 2007 grey metallic 1800cc

First to see will buy, hood great condition, no rips or tears, superb inside and out, 2 keys, contact to view, near offers considered, always well maintained, selling due to new car. Tel: 01757 248865 (North Yorkshire).

£2750

T11/018



MX-5 Mk3 2.0

Very good condition, MOT March 2020, 09 engine, LSD, leather, new refurb wheels, good roof, drives very well, am selling due to bad health and needs to be loved. Tel: 07734 029939 (Bristol).

£4250

T11/021



Mk3 MX-5 2006

Amazing condition, there is 61K on the car, runs and drives like new. Only selling due to an upgrade, car is a Cat C professional repaired to a high standard. Tel: John, 07774 289653 (Co.Down).

£2800 ono

T11/022



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MX-5 NC 2ltr Sport Mk3

Had since August, in which time I've had the wheels sprayed, Eibach lowering springs fitted, Skuzzle Motorsport induction kit, dumpy aerial, clear indicators and £500 spent out on welding work to the rear section of the sills and inner arches, the car also has a Cobalt exhaust. 94K miles, original handbook pack and various history etc, the car is in very great condition inside and out. It's the 2ltr Sport with limited slip diff and it's a manual, MOT August 2019. I've just taken the personalised number plate off, so it's now 'GX55 HSC'. Tel: 07792 042056 (Dorset).

£3600

T11/020



2006 1.8 MX-5

I bought this beautiful silver convertible in May 2018 as a luxury car to drive around but I barely use it, 52K miles. I have a big family so this car is just sitting there, I want this to go quick so please let me know when you can view if you like the look of it. Tel: 07754 364061 (London).

£2999

T11/013



MX-5 1.8 Miyako soft top convertible

2010, 34,410 miles, full service history, very good condition. Tel: 07883 087109 (N. Yorkshire).

£6500

T11/029

[PARTS]



Mazda MX-5 14-inch alloys

4 Mazda factory alloys in 4x100 14-inch 5j et27, all 4 tyres are good Firestone with near new tread. Tel: 07776 118045 (Devon).

£100 ono

T11/028



Mazda MX-5 hard top

Fits Mk1 and Mk2, super condition inside and out, unmarked inside and out, not many in this condition, fits Mk1 and 2, heated rear screen. Tel: 07970 940255 (Hampshire).

£350

T11/015



MX-5 NA '89-'97 full Rocket Bunny body kit wide arch Miata

Brand new and unopened, very rare! This was imported by me for my MX5 project car. However I am now moving abroad and didn't get time to finish it. So I have sold the car and am now selling all of the parts that I bought for it, which were to be fitted, cost £800. Set includes front bumper spoiler lip, all 4 wide arches and rear spoiler, made from top quality fibreglass and finished with a gel coating, ready to be painted. High quality kit, beware of cheap versions! Text: 07727 606619 (Surrey)

£575

T11/019



Genuine Mazda stainless steel luggage rack

(for the Mk2 and 2.5), and set of leather luggage straps. Includes pair of uprated boot lid springs Mazda included in this kit to keep the boot lid open with the boot rack fitted and rubber cushions, immaculate condition (used only once). Brand new together cost nearly £300, sadly no longer own car, hence sale, buyer must collect. Tel: 07876 024252 (Haslemere, Surrey).

£100 ono

T11/005

[MISCELLANEOUS]



Personalised private reg number Mazda MX-5

This listing is for the rights to own my personalised private registration number. Highly desirable personalised private number as the beginning starts 'MX5', a must for any MX-5 owner! Also good if your name includes or sounds like Lew eg Lewis, Louise, etc, I have just put the registration number on retention and have the relevant certificate for this. This cost me £80 and means the registration number can now be assigned to your vehicle, if required I am also happy to assign the registration number for you, I will just need the V5C details of the car you want this private number to belong to, this can all be done quite quickly due to DVLA's online service. Would make a great gift for somebody! Any questions then please ask. Email: laura.x.jones@hotmail.com.

£1200 or sensible offer T11/004



Personal plate

Cherished number plate for a Mazda MX-5, assignment fee already paid, held on retention document. Email: bentleygary57@yahoo.co.uk.

£265

T11/001

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FROM THE ARCHIVE

MOMENTS IN MX-5 HISTORY



The very first trailer-load of Miata MX-5s to arrive in the US is kissed by Californian sunshine. It was an appropriate destination given that it was in these warm climes the MX-5 was conceived more than 30 years ago. Even the wildest optimist within Mazda couldn't have dreamt what a magnificent success the pretty roadster would become.

Coming up in the next issue of **TOTAL MX-5**

Turbo mk4 with serious attitude

With in excess of
300bhp and a
Pandem wide-body
conversion, this
turbocharged mk4
bristles with menace
and energy



PHOTO: LOUIS YIO

Next issue of Total MX-5 on sale June 27

Overseas (approximately): Europe: July 4, USA/Can: August 1, Aus/NZ: August 29

For your nearest stockist worldwide see page 3

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